

FITZMAURICE:

A NOVEL.

By WILLIAM FREDERICK WILLIAMS,

AUTHOR OF

SKETCHES OF MODERN LIFE; OR, MAN AS HE
OUGHT NOT TO BE.

IN TWO VOLUMES.—VOL. I.

The heart surrender'd to the ruling pow'r
Of some ungovern'd passion ev'ry hour,
Finds, by degrees, the truths which once bore sway,
And all their deep impreffions, wear away.
So coin grows smooth in traffic current pass'd,
Till Cæsar's image is effac'd at last. CONFER,

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P R E F A C E.

I BELIEVE no work requires more apology than a novel; I wish I could say something in extenuation of the faults of this; but it is out of my power. I was not stimulated to the undertaking by "hunger or request of friends." I have had more time than sufficient to compose a much longer work; I have no pursuits to deter me from using my pen. "Why then," will a critic say, "is this work written no better?" Simply because I can write no better. I have done all I could; but if I had the united powers of a

Richardson, a Fielding, a Burney, and a West, I would have exerted them for the entertainment of the public.

I write, as most do, from a *mania scribendi*: let not my frank acknowledgment prove hurtful to me. Many to whom in intellect I am a dwarf, have prostituted their talents by defending the most reprehensible tenets: that such a stigma may not fall on me, is my earnest wish. I have endeavoured to steer clear of politics. I would not insult the guardians of our faith by weak praise: yet when I see our religion abused; when I see unfortunate wretches driven to despair and suicide by the threats of ignorance and craft; when the weak arm of man dares to direct the thunders of Omnipotence; am I to blame, if indignation supersede contempt?

Cowper;

PREFACE.

Cowper, "the god of my idolatry," the moral Cowper, has exposed the character of the clerical fribble. With such a sanction surely I cannot err.

As I have affixed my name to this my second production, I beg leave to disclaim all personality. Should any of my opinions appear to be blameworthy, a candid criticism will point them out; if I thought it grounded (and I am not a bigot to my own ideas), I would immediately recant; indeed my health is such, that I should be sorry to write

"One line which dying I could wish to blot."

It was my intention to have dedicated these volumes to Mrs. West; but conscious of their defects, my fears conquered my vanity. I may, however, tread humbly in her steps, as an advocate for morality and
social

social order : and I hope the authoreſs of
**THE GOSSIP'S STORY, and A TALE OF
THE TIMES,** will not be offended at my
presumption in naming her, as one whom
I would take for a model, though I muſt
ever deſpair of equalling her talents.

FITZMAURICE.

CHAP. I.

A Bankruptcy.

“LET us not thus give way to despair : it is true our fortunes are ruined, but a competence remains ; and when I know that our poverty is a proof of our integrity, I can look down with contempt on the fraudulently affluent.”

Thus spake the worthy Mr. Fitzmaurice to his weeping family. His wife sat in sullen sorrow : her mind was of the common cast ; she wept a little for her children, and much for herself. She felt

all the bitterness of her lot when she reflected that she must forego the luxuries of life, and many of its comforts:—no dress! no splendid fêtes! no equipage! The thought was misery. Her daughters, Helen and Anastatia, participated in some degree in their mother's feelings; yet, when they raised their eyes to their father, a fresh burst of tears would flow at the idea of his distressed situation in the decline of life. The son, Edward, was too young to feel his situation, but he wept because his sisters set the example.

Mr. Fitzmaurice had been an eminent merchant; unforeseen losses had reduced him to bankruptcy; he gave up his all to the creditors, and meant to retire on the pittance allowed him, to a cheap part of the country.

Helen Fitzmaurice had reached her eighteenth year. Her temper was mild and benevolent; she possessed a great share of sensibility; and as Mrs. Fitzmaurice had taken no pains to watch the unfolding

unfolding character of her daughter, this sensibility often carried her to extremes: to the tale of distress her eye afforded a tear, and her hand relief; but as her bounty was indiscriminate, she had often cause to sigh in secret at the ingratitude of the world.

Anastatia Fitzmaurice was the reverse of her sister. Her heart was good, but its impulses were regulated by what she dignified by the name of *prudence*. Her temper was cold and reserved: when a child, she evinced a peculiar dislike to dolls, and was never known to be guilty of a game at romps. When she reached her fifteenth year, her mother took her from the boarding-school, and permitted her to join the circle of fashion; but small was the pleasure she derived from this indulgence. She was pleased for the three first days of her emancipation from back-boards, stocks, and chain-stitch; but in a short time, the inactivity of her mind caused her to sigh for the more retired scenes of

a boarding-school. Her sorrow for the losses of her father was unmixed with any selfish idea. She loved him, for she had from her infancy been told she ought to do so; but her affections were weak, and more dependant on certain rules of action, than the impulse of the heart.

The morning arrived when the Fitzmaurices were to quit Portman Square for a small village in Devonshire. A hackney coach conveyed them to the inn where the stage set out. It was the first time Mrs. Fitzmaurice had ever made use of such a conveyance, and her tears flowed anew. Her husband was calm. Helen checked a sigh, and Anastatia betrayed no emotion whatever. Little Edward was pleased with the idea of travelling; and his infant prattle tended in some degree to divert the thoughts of the party from a contemplation of their misfortunes. When arrived at the place of their destination, the situation and appearance of the house again called forth the ready
tears

tears of Mrs Fitzmaurice. She observed to her husband, that it was nearly two hundred yards distant from the village; and that there was nothing to be seen from the windows but a hanging wood with a river running at the foot of it, and winding through a valley of such extent as to fatigue the eye. The sight of houses was obstructed by a clump of firs. It might be all very fine and romantic, but she had a wish to see something human, and did not like to be bored to death by sheep and cattle at the river side, though they might have as much sense as most of the west-country bumpkins. Mr. Fitzmaurice endeavoured to remove her objections: he expatiated on the beauty of the country, and the pleasures of retirement; but when she proposed some alterations in the house, he candidly informed her that his finances were not competent to indulge her.

“What, Mr. Fitzmaurice! are we to sit in a room like this? The paper is old,

and the carpetting I need say nothing of; it speaks for itself;—what a hideous glaring colour! Surely my brother Rigby might have given us a better house than this? Little did I think that I should ever have had to put my foot in such a barn. Your clerks would have been ashamed of it.”

“Your brother, my dear, is surely not the proper object of reproach: he gives us this house, and allows you a hundred a-year. Our present situation may be his to-morrow:—a merchant’s concerns, I need not say, are variable.”

“So much the worse, Mr. Fitzmaurice! Why did you not stop when you were well? You know I always advised you to give up mercantile concerns; and when we *were* ruined, why could you not manage as well as other people? Purblock, the wine-merchant, has failed no less than three times, and he is now in as good circumstances as ever.”

“Yes, my love,” said Mr. Fitzmaurice;

rice; "but I believe that Purblock would gladly change situations with me whenever he puts on his nightcap."

"And I with his wife, whenever I put on mine," cried Mrs. Fitzmaurice. "Oh dear! oh dear! how wretchedly we are situated! We have little more than the common comforts of life, and have been here almost a week, without any body calling, to whom I may impart my sorrows."

Mr. Fitzmaurice left the room, hurt at the behaviour of his wife; her querulous impatience added pangs to those he already suffered on the account of his children. He walked to the river side, accompanied by Helen, Anastatia, and Edward; the evening was serene, and Helen proposed lengthening the walk. They had not proceeded far before a gate impeded their progress; it was padlocked, and they were preparing to return, when Anastatia declared herself fatigued, and begged to rest awhile. Mr. Fitzmaurice's

spirits were revived by a view of nature ;
 he affectionately smiled on his children,
 and begged them to sing his favourite air.

S O N G.

A safe retreat from care, from pain,
 Is still the happy shepherd's lot :
 In vaulted roofs if sorrow reign,
 Oh may I ever prize my cot !

Amanda (thus I fearful spoke),
 Bethink thee, when the tempests blow,
 They rend the stately branching oak,
 But spare the violet below.

When the sisters had finished, Anastatia, turning her head, beheld a gentleman leaning over the gate, and listening with attention. With a half-shriek she apprized her sister of the circumstance, and the whole party arose from the ground in some confusion.

“ Pray don't let me disturb you, young ladies,” said the gentleman ; “ I beg you would go on : in my opinion there is nothing prettier than a pretty song. I am

very

very fond of music, and play a little on the fiddle myself." At the same time unlocking the gate, he advanced to Mr. Fitzmaurice, and informed him that his name was Pobjoy, and that he held the situation of surgeon, apothecary, and man-midwife, at the village: "In either of which capacities," said he, "I shall be most happy to receive your commands."

Mr. Fitzmaurice smiled at the compliment, thanked him, and was retiring with his children; but Mr. Pobjoy earnestly requested them to walk in and view his enclosure. "I retire here," said he, with a consequential air, "from the hurry and bustle of the village. I have endeavoured to render the place as tasty as possible: it is my opinion, that a genteel income is nothing without we enjoy it; money is mere bell-metal if not put in circulation. Not that I approve of extravagant profusion; in my opinion, there is a medium in all things; don't you think so, Miss?" addressing himself to Anastatia, who im-

mediately assented to the truth of the remark.

"You have a sweet situation," said Helen; "but why do you allow that little shabby house to obstruct the view over the river?"

"That, that's my root-house, Miss—all built of mud and straw, and old branches of trees: a pleasure-ground would be nothing without a root-house: I planted it all round with sweet peas and polyantheses; but what with the ducks and the gallinaceous tribe, my peas are all gone; and it is my opinion, that nothing but a hempen neckcloth will prevent the idle boys from clambering over the pales to pick my flowers."—The party now approached this modern root-house, which bore a strong resemblance to an ancient pig-stye. Pobjoy advanced; "Aye, aye," cried he, "I said so; I am of opinion, that James Dobbins will get a horsewhipping for this; and yet I should be sorry

for

for the lad too : I hate to hurt any body, except in the way of my profession."

The root-house was so low, that none of the party could stand upright. Helen archly remarked the inconvenience, softening her observation by expatiating on the views the root-house afforded. Mr. Pobjoy confessed, that he and a labourer were the only architects ; and as scaffolding was expensive, he had built it in its present state. After having suffered some time from the inconvenience of posture, the party walked round what the proprietor called the park, which was, in fact, no more than three small fields thrown into one. Mr. Pobjoy begged them to remark his fictitious village, which consisted of a church and two cottages built of wood, and fit for the habitation of the emperor of Lilliput and his whole court. Mr. Fitzmaurice, unwilling to praise what his judgment condemned, proposed returning ; and Mr. Pobjoy, having invited himself to tea on the Thursday following,

permitted them to depart. While Mr. Fitzmaurice walked home, the little apothecary retired to prepare himself for a visit in the village, where, at a card-party, the character of the new-comers was to be canvassed.

The party were already assembled at the house of Mrs. Pratt, the *respectable* widow of an earless attorney at Exeter. Prudential reasons caused her to retire from that city, and her economy enabled her to support a genteel appearance in the village.

Mrs. Pratt opened the congress, by inquiring if any of the party had seen the new-comers.

Miss Dawkins, the daughter of a neighbouring farmer, said that she had seen the young ladies at a distance, and that they looked mighty genteel.

Miss Llewellyn, a maiden lady of sixty-five, who had made a few *faux pas* about forty years before, expressed a wish to know if they were such people as folks might

might visit who had any regard for their character.

"I wonder who they are," said the exciseman; "I don't approve of such a conflux of strangers to different parts of the country: perhaps they are emigrant French come to cut our throats; I say, I don't like it at all."

"Bless me, Mr. Simmons, how can you talk so shockingly?" exclaimed Mrs. Pratt: "why now I protest I am quite in a tremble; dear me, if they should be enemies after all!"

"I don't know how far it may be in their power to hurt us themselves," said the little smirking curate; "but it is possible that they may give intelligence to the French; and I think that the post-master ought to examine all their letters: too much care cannot be taken."

"No more it can, Mr. Whitmore: yes, yes, as sure as Peter Pomfret, they are spies. How very lucky that I have not visited them! you may depend upon

it

it that I shall never put a foot in the house."

"Upon my word," said the maiden lady, "folks must be very careful whom they visit; I dare say the girls are no better than they should be; one of them had a feather in her hat—how ridiculous! a feather in the hat is a bad sign; I don't like it; I'll be bound they are flirts, and will come to no good." A smothered groan, and a general significant head-shaking, took place at this sagacious observation.

A wounded sailor with a little boy approached the parlour-window; after many observations on the sad imposture of mendicants, the poor object went unrelieved away. He slowly retired, and leaned against a tree opposite the house. Mr. Fitzmaurice and his family (who had recovered their fatigue by resting at Mr. Pobjoy's pleasure-ground) were taking a walk to view the village. The party at Mrs. Pratt's crowded to the windows to view

view the objects of their conversation, and were making some remarks on their dress and deportment, when Helen, who walked before the rest, stopped short; the wretched figure of the mendicant struck her eye, and her hand mechanically felt for her purse. Every word might be heard by Mrs. Pratt's party, who were (wondrous to relate!) hushed in silence. "Poor man!" cried Helen, "you seem quite spent; have you walked far to-day?"

"Yes, bless you, Miss; I come from Exeter; I am wounded, and am afraid I shall never be able to walk to London. I am in hopes to get into Greenwich Hospital; but if I should die, what will become of my poor Jem?"

"Oh!" cried Edward eagerly, "he shall live along with us; Papa always takes care of poor people—don't you, papa?"

Mr. Fitzmaurice mournfully shook his head, and desiring the disabled seaman to follow

follow him, walked homeward with his family.

"There's for you!" exclaimed Mrs. Pratt; "who ever heard the like? We shall have the parish over-run with vagrants of one sort or another. But, dear me! is not that Mr. Pobjoy?—la! he is speaking to them! only think!—I wonder how he got acquainted with them! but Mr. Pobjoy is too good-natured, that is the truth of it; he is too good-natured, indeed."

"Too good-natured, indeed," echoed Mr. Simmons.

"Too good-natured by far," said Miss Llewellyn, yawning violently. A silence ensued, as is always the case, when, in a scandalous coterie, an individual, by accident, becomes the theme of panegyric.

The apothecary soon after entered the room.

"Your servant, ladies; ha! ha! engaged over your prattle broth, I find!—

Excuse

Excuse my joke ; I hope I am not too late. Did you see the new-comers ? Upon my word, Miss Anastatia is a pretty modest young lady."

" Miss what !" exclaimed the antiquated virgin ; " the name you mentioned is no Christian one, I am certain. I don't believe that there is a Susan or a Sarah to be found in the parish register for the last fifteen years : the world is sadly altered since my time."

" There is a medium in all things," replied Pobjoy ; " but in my opinion it is immaterial whether the name is Anastatia or plain Ann. Miss seems to be a very quiet, decent sort of a good young woman ; I like the family much."

" But *who are they*, Mr. Pobjoy ? that is what we want to know. If they are good, quiet, neighbourly people, I am sure I have no objection to cultivate a nearer acquaintance ; but I must first learn their characters, out of respect to my own."

Pobjoy

Pobjoy then informed them of all the circumstances he knew, and adhered pretty closely to the truth. He, however, magnified the remaining property of Mr. Fitzmaurice, because Anastatia, who had innocently informed him of the misfortunes of her father, was ignorant how far his affairs were involved.

This account stimulated the curiosity of the female part of the company, who now resolved to honour the new-comers with a visit; and in a short time Mrs. Fitzmaurice became reconciled to her situation, and shone forth a leading member of the scandalous coterie.

CHAP. II.

A modern Saint—a modern Merchant.

FOUR years passed away with little to dissipate the village monotony. Mr. Fitzmaurice's health declined: his wife, by economy, supported a genteel appearance: Helen retained her innocent gaiety; but the natural seriousness of Anastasia degenerated into gloom.

Mr. Fitzmaurice had received many letters from London, the contents of which he kept secret. Anxiety seemed to prey upon his mind. At length a letter was delivered to him while the family were assembled at breakfast. Mr. Fitzmaurice hastily read it, and, with a sigh, said, "Edward, my dear, we must part."

Edward stood in silence. Helen, alarmed, inquired his meaning. "He must go," said Mr. Fitzmaurice, "to his uncle's.

uncle's. Mr. Rigby is willing to receive him as an assistant in the compting-house. Situated as I am, the offer is not to be rejected."

"The most lucky thing in the world!" exclaimed Mrs. Fitzmaurice. "You know I always advised you to send him to London. Who knows but the boy may retrieve our ruined fortunes? We may yet show people who we are. I shall then have a triumph over that old cat Miss Llewellyn, who holds her shrivelled head so high, and talks of the beauty of her great aunt Alice, and the exploits of Sir Gwynneth, who was born before the creation of the world."

"Your hopes are sanguine, and your triumph perhaps premature," said Fitzmaurice. "I fear, my love, you will be shrivelled too before Edward makes a fortune."

"That's always your way, Mr. Fitzmaurice; you never let me enjoy a cheerful

al thought. Edward will certainly make fortune: at least I may hope so."

"I hope he may," said Fitzmaurice; but more earnestly do I hope, that, when he has made it, the acquisition may be productive of no bitter after-reflection."

"No indeed, Sir, it shall not," exclaimed Edward earnestly: "but you told me, good people prospered;—how comes it then that you are no longer rich?"

"I have endeavoured to do my duty—may hope I have fulfilled it—and I am rich."

"Indeed, Sir!"

"Yes, my boy, rich, in the possession of that on which the changes of the world have no influence—the treasure of a conscience void of reproach. May such be your lot, my Edward! You are about to enter on an arduous task. Temptations to fraud are many in the concerns of a merchant. Your uncle is a worthy man; he bears an unblemished character on Change; yet—my paternal anxiety in-

duces me to charge you never to join in any act your heart may condemn. Should you find my suspicions groundless, return to this humble dwelling—return poor and honest—I shall glory in such a son;—but should you suffer a thirst of wealth to damp the feelings of a man of honour, I should pity, despise, and renounce you.”

Mrs. Fitzmaurice chid her husband for filling the poor boy's head with prejudices against his uncle. She said that Mr. Rigby's word was as good as the Bank, and that there was not a person of quality but would be happy to see him at their tables. She hoped her brother was as honest as when they left London. “And besides,” added she, “when you were in business, you often joined him in schemes I knew nothing about.”

“I mean not to impeach his honesty,” replied Fitzmaurice; “but there are some concerns in which men, reputed of the strictest probity, will often engage, from the little probability of detection. I wish

to see my son the honour and support of his country—an honest merchant; not a speculator or monopolist."

Mrs. Fitzmaurice muttered something about scrupulous nicety, and what it brought some folks to, but dared not openly avow her sentiments.—"My son, get money!" was her favourite maxim; and as she only languished for a renewal of her splendid establishment, she would not have been a severe censor, had her son transgressed the commands of Fitzmaurice. In a few days Edward set off for London. He dropt many tears at parting from his parents, and his heart felt more than his tongue expressed.

Mr. Rigby's compting-house was in Friday Street: his dwelling was in Piccadilly. The character of this gentleman was well known to Fitzmaurice; and his cautions were not given to Edward without foundation.

Mrs. Rigby had thrice received the nuptial benediction. She had in her youth

youth been beautiful, and this qualification procured her two rich husbands. Her wealth tempted their successor, and he triumphantly bore off his prize from a captain of dragoons, a dancing-master, an Irish peer, and a tragic performer of some note. The arms with which Mr. Rigby carried on the siege were religion and luxury. The object of his passion had, during the lifetime of her former husbands, given much just occasion to the exercise of censorious tongues. At the age of fifty-three she resolved to live irreproachably. Indeed, time had cruelly ravaged her charms; and every year brought gray hairs, or carried away a tooth: indolence and good living had converted plumpness into rotundity, and the bloom of health into the flush of plenitude. Mr. Rigby spared no cost nor assiduity to gain the rich widow. Her table was the theme of his panegyric; and the unction with which he said grace won her heart. They were married, and
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in a short time entertained a sovereign contempt for each other.

Though Mrs. Rigby railed at intemperance with the fervency of a recluse, she neglected not to store her table with every luxury, and to repair the inroads made on her constitution by the alternate use of cordials and quack medicines; but her leading feature was devotion. She believed, or pretended to believe, herself one of the elect. She was continually prophesying misfortune to the country, and recounting and expounding dreams. The house swarmed with teachers and spiritual advisers, who were attracted by the splendour and elegance of the table. Mr. Rigby having gained his end by religious grimace, threw off the mask, and longed to enjoy his friend, bottle, and song. But his pious helpmate counteracted all his endeavours, by rendering the house disagreeable to any but her own coterie. She was a complete gossip, delighted in cakes and caudle, and was so

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constant an attendant on baptisms and funerals, that her acquaintance declared she was never happy but when bringing any one in, or sending any one out of the world.

When Edward arrived at the Bell Savage inn, he found a servant waiting to conduct him to his uncle's. This was an attention he owed to his aunt, who to spiritual added family pride. A splendid chariot conveyed him to Piccadilly.—It was twelve o'clock. Edward was introduced into a richly-furnished apartment, where he found his uncle and aunt busily employed in the duties of the breakfast-table.

Mr. Rigby shook his nephew by the hand without rising from his chair, and presented him to his wife, who affectionately kissed his ruddy cheek, and busily employed herself in making tea for the new-comer. Indeed, his appearance was such as to excite the liveliest interest. He was tall, though not full grown; his hair flowed

flowed in luxuriant ringlets over his shoulders, and shaded a face where every opening virtue bloomed.

After some cold inquiries after his family, Mr. Rigby broke out into encomiums on his nephew's person.—“ Ah, you young blushing rogue!” cried he, “ that face of yours will one day make the women's hearts ache. We shall have all the sex pulling caps for you.”

“ I wish, Mr. Rigby,” exclaimed his pious mate, “ that you would not corrupt the boy. Don't mind him, child; the women are all good-for-nothing huffies: they paint their faces, and look out of the window, like Jezebel of old. London is the common sewer of iniquity. Avoid the society of those who would persuade you to harm. The inhabitants of this wicked town dress in purple and fine linen, and feed sumptuously: they go to balls, and routs, and vile masquerades, where there is nothing but music and

antichristian dancing, and rich wines, which are drank even to the dregs; and besides all this, the playhouses and——”

“ Why heydey! Mrs. Rigby! who is corrupting the boy now? A pretty picture you have drawn, and very likely to frighten a youth from evil! Confound me if a libertine could have done it better!”

“ Don’t swear, Mr. Rigby, don’t swear.”

“ Zounds and the devil, woman, who swears? But that is always the way. You and your pious set make virtue to consist of walking over red-hot gridirons, or roasting alive upon spits; and vice you paint so fair and enticing, that it is no wonder a youth should prefer it. It is by such canting that so many converts are made to the devil.”

Mrs. Rigby now poured forth a torrent of religious abuse. She did not dare to call her husband rogue or villain; but she

consigned him, without mercy, to flames everlasting. He very coolly bore her invectives; and when the coach was announced, took Edward by the arm, and drove to Friday Street.

Seven years were consumed in the counting-house of Mr. Rigby. Edward was diligent: his uncle termed him a sober good youth, and advanced him to the dignity of head clerk. During this time the heart of Edward received two great shocks, by the death of his father and elder sister. Anastasia was married to Mr. Pobjoy, and was yearly adding to her family. Mrs. Fitzmaurice seldom wrote to Edward, except on the birth of a grandchild; and her letters were short and uninteresting.

One morning Mr. Rigby called his nephew into the drawing-room, and, with a look of great vexation, declared that he was likely to lose fifteen thousand pounds. Edward inquired the particulars; and his

uncle informed him, that by the impending failure of a house at Leghorn he should in all probability be a very considerable loser. Mr. Rigby added, that a prudent, intelligent man must be dispatched to the spot; and as he had every reliance on his abilities and integrity, he had fixed his choice on him.

Every thing being prepared, Edward set off for Italy. The urgency of his business would not permit him to take leave of his family, otherwise than by letter: indeed, long separation had obliterated, in a great degree, the stronger affections.

Arrived at Leghorn, Edward found his uncle's affairs in a very unprosperous train; yet after close attention for two years, he not only saved the sum in question, but increased it by three thousand pounds. Mr. Rigby was in raptures: he declared Edward to be the best of youths, desired him to return to England with all speed,

speed, and announced his intention of making him his heir. Edward closed his concerns at Leghorn, and, after having visited Rome, arrived with health and honour in his native country.

CHAP. III.

Modern Education, and its Effects.

EDWARD, on his return to England, received the most flattering testimonies of regard from his uncle and aunt. Mr. Rigby was a martyr to the gout. His temper was soured. Not even a luxurious table could compensate for his peevish transports. His wife, though still a decided puritan, had discarded some of her spiritual retinue, as their urgent exhortations for the erection of a chapel at her own expense began to alarm her avarice. Her conduct was marked with inconsistency. She would one week renounce the vanity of dress; the next, load herself with all the richness of an extensive wardrobe. It is true, she kept up the costume of her sect, even in her vanities. Her
jewels

jewels were set in an old fashion, and her laces were put on without elegance. In one point, however, the husband and wife coincided—in their love to their nephew. The three thousand pounds Edward had saved were presented to him for pocket-money by Mr. Rigby, who declared him his heir; and soon after, to the astonishment of his acquaintance, quitted all mercantile concerns, and retired to a private life with a fortune of two hundred and fifty thousand pounds.

Edward was dazzled by the brilliancy of his situation. When head clerk to Mr. Rigby, he was admitted to the circles of private life, and esteemed a good kind of a young man; but when heir of such immense wealth, his society was coveted, and his opinion asked, on all occasions. The poor nobility would attend his dinners, and the sons of dukes lounge with him in Bond Street.

Harsh and severe as Mr. and Mrs. Rigby were to all the world besides, they

dared not thwart a wish of Edward's. To him they were all mildness and urbanity; they indulged his every wish, and studied at all times how to render his life a scene of joy. With these incentives to folly, will it be believed that Edward never abused their partiality? He saw their foibles, but endeavoured not to think of them. It is true, he plunged into some of the fashionable follies of the day; but he stood short of vice. He possessed what his father had most wished him to possess—a feeling heart and virtuous principles. In the counting-house of his uncle his generosity had never been developed. The concerns of trade had thrown a veil over his natural character; but now he gave way to every generous impulse. By this it is not meant to be inferred, that a man of business must necessarily be incapable of worthy feelings: the contrary is daily evident. But when a youthful mind is tied down to one particular pursuit, important duties may be neglected, not from want of feeling,

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ing, but want of thought. Of the three thousand pounds given to Edward by Mr. Rigby, two thousand were immediately settled upon Mrs. Fitzmaurice, and were to devolve, upon her death, to the children of Anastatia.

Among the numerous acquaintance of this favourite of fortune, was the Honourable and Reverend Aubrey Delvalley. He was the second son of a nobleman, who left him dependant on his elder brother. The interest of his family procured him a considerable living. His sister Augusta had, when a child, been taken under the protection of an aunt, who, dying, bequeathed to her the bulk of her property, which amounted to sixty thousand pounds. The noble representative of the house of Delvalley had found the air of the continent extremely salutary for "a consumption of the purse."

Aubrey Delvalley was an agreeable companion. He had entered the church more by compulsion than choice; nor

could eight hundred a year make amends for the livelier scenes he was compelled to abandon. He lived with his sister in Piccadilly. He bore the character of a finished gentleman, mixed with the first circles, and, by some popular productions, had given reason to suppose that he would rise in the church.

Augusta Delvalley was a perfect beauty. The most critical observer could find nothing to condemn in her face and person. To the lavish bounties of nature she joined a superior mind. Humane, sincere, unaffected, she gained every heart; but a spark of impetuosity lay dormant in her breast. She knew it not; for in the common occurrences of fashionable life she had found nothing to excite her interest. Congenial tempers soon discover themselves. Edward, from his intimacy with Delvalley, had frequent opportunities of conversing with Augusta. Her strong sense, tempered by feminine delicacy, made a forcible impression on his mind. He found a
charm

charm in her conversation which he felt wanting in that of most of his female acquaintance. Augusta perceived his partiality; she hoped it was love, or rather she would not suffer herself to doubt it; she redoubled her efforts to charm, valued not the remarks of the censorious, but persisted in attempting to secure the heart of Edward.

The object of her attachment, blind to the consequences, continued to be a daily visitor at the house. No suspicion of Augusta's partiality in his favour had ever entered his imagination. He had often been rallied on her account, but paid no attention to the miserable jests passed on his conduct: he treated her as a sister, with respectful attentions; these Augusta continued to mistake, and awaited the avowal of his love with anxiety and impatience.

Delvalley saw with pleasure the chance of a connexion which must ultimately redound to his advantage. He encouraged

raged every opportunity of leaving the parties together. Indeed he, though a man of much penetration, was, in common with all the world, deceived. He believed his sister the object of Edward's affection, and was perplexed how to account for his mysterious silence. Such a circumstance as the connexion of two persons well known in fashionable life, could not escape the ears of Mr. Rigby, who, one morning after breakfast, desired a conference with his nephew. After telling him that he should never pretend to cross his inclinations, he blamed him for concealing his attachment. "I know," said he, "that you might do better, but really sixty thousand pounds is pretty well—considering——"

Edward was amazed; he begged his uncle to explain himself; and when Mr. Rigby had done so, he assured him that he was entirely mistaken. "That I admire Miss Delvalley," said he, "is most true; but I am convinced there is no
more

more attachment on her side to me, than the attentions she esteems due to her brother's friend."

Mr. Rigby chid him for having such an humble opinion of his own merits, and swore that he might gain the first dutchess in the land.

Edward now perceived that the report was too prevalent; and unwilling to give Augusta any cause to regret having honoured him with particular attention, he determined to pass a month with his family in Devonshire. This he had formerly often proposed doing, but his mother was too unwell, or Anastatia near her time: some trifling excuse was always made, and Edward at length lost every wish to undertake the journey:—but since Mr. Rigby had declared him his heir, repeated letters filled with every protestation of regard, had been sent from his mother, sister, and her husband. Edward at length resolved to visit the scenes of his childhood, and wrote the much-de-
CII
fired

fired news to Anastatia, who, by the return of post, sent him the following letter :

“ MY DEAR BROTHER,

“ I received your kind letter, and am happy to inform you that we are all in good health. You say that you mean to be with us on Saturday the 20th :—may I beg you not to come till the 24th, as I have not yet got every thing in order ? Your bed, you may depend upon it, shall be well aired ; and I have sent Dickens to Exeter for an additional mattress. You must not expect every thing here so comfortable and fine as you get it in London ; but you are heartily welcome to the best we can afford. The children are so very noisy, that I am obliged to drop my pen.—The Doctor, who presents his best compliments, is of opinion that it is better to attend the household duties, than to idle away one’s time in scribbling. You were so young when you left us, that you have

no

no doubt forgotten Dr. Pobjoy: I can assure you that he is a very good, humane man, and you will like him much.

"I am, my dear brother,

"Your affectionate sister,
Rockbourne, "ANASTATIA POBJOY."

Devon.

"P. S. Your mother, and my little ones, Edward, Mary, Nathaniel, and Anastatia, who is a twelvemonth old, come the 14th of March, send you a kiss apiece."

Edward proposed setting off for Devonshire without taking leave of Delvalley; and unwilling to mortify his family by a display of ostentation, he refused Mr. Rigby's post-chaise, and walked one evening into the city to take a place in a stage-coach. He was passing through the Strand, when his arm was suddenly seized by a female. She was tall and thin; her dress was white, and she wore a beaver hat with two broken feathers: a quantity of rouge
was

was smeared over her hollow cheeks, and she tottered with weakness. She begged Edward, with a faint voice and hysteric laugh, to see her home. He disengaged his arm, and walked quickly on. "Stop!" cried she, as loud as her weakness would permit her; "Oh, hear me!"

Edward involuntarily turned back.

"You must despise me," said the trembling creature," but do not suffer me to perish—I am starving—Give me but enough to buy me bread for this night. I covet, yet I fear death—Oh, I have a heavy account to answer!"

To a tale of distress Edward knew not how to shut his ears. He gave his arm to the wretched woman, who conducted him to an apartment near the Strand. Having satisfied the calls of hunger, she thanked Edward for his bounty in a manner which evinced that she had not always been the child of penury and vice.

Edward was struck with compassion—"If," said he, "the recital will not

too

too much wound your feelings, may I ask how your life has become so unfortunate?"

"You have a right to ask, Sir," said the poor woman; "and I shall feel a melancholy pleasure in informing you of the most striking facts of my life.—My errors I owe to education; I hope no deliberate vice had a root in my heart.—I am the daughter of a man of large property: my mother was a gay fashionable woman; who, when I was old enough, sent me, with a younger sister, to an eminent boarding-school. At first I wept much at quitting my parents, but I soon began to contract friendships, and became reconciled to my lot, because I found much time might be spent free from the restraints of our governesses. Mrs. Larkinson, who had been admitted into the partnership of the school, had good nature as well as good sense, but was indolent, and fonder of reading herself than of attending to the lessons of her pupils. Mrs. Delarive (under whose care I was
more

more immediately placed) had never been married. She was fast advancing in years; and the virgin elegance of youth had given place to the virgin sharpness of age. Her features were large and prominent; and a redness, which was not confined to her cheeks, gave a fierceness to her eye, naturally keen. She was of a very ancient family, and preserved with care the tree of her genealogy, which she boasted had never been contaminated by any base alliance, though the branch of it to which she belonged had long been falling to decay.

“With much sanctity and decorum of manners, she possessed the power of pleasing the parents and terrifying the children, and had acquired the fame of being one of the best tempered and most prudent governesses in or about the metropolis. This fame, and her great family, had procured her the patronage of some of the nobility, many of whose children were committed to her care.

“Though

“ Though idle, I appeared to be quick, and the greatest expectations were formed by my father from my residence at a seminary, where *every thing* was professed to be taught. Indeed, the school was regularly visited by masters of French and Italian, music and dancing; nor were the ornamental works of the needle forgotten; two or three months hard labour would often produce a highly finished fruit-piece or landscape, almost equal to a good drawing, the work of a few hours. Many young ladies who finished these useless ornamental pieces could scarcely hem a handkerchief. Nor was the person neglected: the feet, stretched in stocks, were prepared for the operations of the dancing-master; and to give a proper motion to the knees, the poor girls were made to curtsy in a narrow space between two planks; the shoulders and neck were to be forced awry by iron collars and braces by the most celebrated maker; and those whose necks Nature had unwisely formed

formed too short, were often suspended in a position far from agreeable. In cases of excessive health the Doctor was frequently called in, and full doses administered, *to prevent our becoming gross and vulgar!* I well recollect, that this son of physic once met me, and declaring I was too florid, ordered me a draught of the most nauseous kind.

“Dancing, though a school duty, was a melancholy amusement; and when our lessons in that art were finished, we were taught the most elegant manner of entering a room, how to curtsy to a duke, to salute a lady, or address the wife of a baronet; and these characters we all personated in our turn.

“When a child, I had been indulged by my mother in every whim; it is therefore not to be wondered at that I sometimes resisted the commands of my teacher. I found no charms in the calculations of arithmetic, or the dry rules of grammar; my mind was not sufficiently expanded to perceive

perceive the utility of laborious exertion, and, like the rest of my schoolfellows, I found nothing more irksome than the repetition of pages I did not understand, or of musical notes, which associated with the ideas of force and compulsion. Perhaps this has since tended to lessen the effects of the most delightful harmony. The discipline of Mrs. Delarive, a discipline, I believe, common in schools, was applied to all dispositions, however varied. Threats and punishments were the most powerful engines; sometimes the point was to be carried by the exposure of an individual to the eyes of her companions in some disgraceful and painful situation; which, while it rendered the sufferer, by repetition, proof to the feelings of shame, gradually hardened the heart, and removed one of the strongest incitements to what is great and good. Sometimes even corporal punishments were inflicted, and those not always with judgment and moderation. The effect of these measures was

was to inspire in most of us a wish to circumvent our rulers, and every artifice cunning could suggest was made use of for that purpose; not indeed without success: instruction was evaded, and the instructor deceived. Some of the scholars, and among them I may reckon myself, were in open rebellion, and, by an obstinate perseverance, set all power at defiance. Having often felt the rigour of injustice, we were disposed to look upon all commands as equally arbitrary, and, mutually encouraging this system of opposition, held in the greatest contempt all those who, by flattery and acquiescence, were endeavouring to ingratiate themselves with our instructors. Frequent complaints were made to my mother of my ill conduct; but she was too much a woman of the *ton* to care about the education of her children: she was glad to place us in a situation where we might not interfere with her pleasures.

“ In this seminary I remained some years,

years, making but a slow proficiency in the polite accomplishments, while my mind was stored with little but what chance threw in my way. To read any but school-books we were forbidden by express command, and the idea of a command was sufficient to inspire us with a wish to transgress it. Looking upon myself as an object of persecution, I was accustomed to seek for amusement in the wild wanderings of an irregular mind, rendered more irregular by the books I was accustomed to peruse. Having money at my command, and consequently the good will of one of the maids, I daily devoured a portion of the contents of a neighbouring library; miscellaneous indeed, but chiefly abounding with modern novels and romances: none were rejected, though some of them would often raise a blush.

“But I beg your pardon, Sir, for dwelling so minutely on what must to you be an uninteresting subject; let me, however, ask any parent, how, with such an education,

cation, a child's happiness can be secure? an education by which all that is frivolous is cultivated, and the more important duties neglected.

"Among my schoolfellows was a Miss Robinson; she was an amiable but weak girl. A strict friendship subsisted between us; I had no secrets for her: she partook of my pleasures, and shared my griefs. I was now fifteen, and fast approaching to womanhood. Mrs. Delarive redoubled every care to render me as attractive as possible. When I occasionally visited my mother, the attentions of the men always set my little heart in a flutter, and I failed not to communicate my new ideas to Sophia Robinson. This young lady's parents were West Indians, and she had no opportunity of mixing with any but the select company of Mrs. Delarive; but the attentions of her drawing-master compensated for the restraints of a boarding-school—the hand which should have directed the pencil of Sophia was oftener occupied

occupied in pressing with ardour her slender fingers. I was privy to her attachment, and sympathized with her feelings, but was ignorant of the desperate resolution she had formed. One morning Sophia was not to be found; Mrs. Larkinson was almost frantic — Mrs. Delarive fainted away; nor was it till she had swallowed repeated cordials that she was enabled to weep, or stagger to her bed. The elopement of Sophia was generally approved of by her young companions; her spirit was extolled, and her situation envied; while a very few, who were considered as predestined old maids, condemned the imprudence and criminality of her proceeding. I was known to be the particular friend of Sophia; this was sufficient to stamp me as an accomplice: the fact could not be proved, but I suffered the punishment of guilt; sneers and neglect proved the anger of my teachers, and from these I was delivered by my mother,

who took me, together with my sister, from the school.

“ I now began my career of life. Little enured to the habits of thinking, I possessed but a small share of foresight; and knowing nothing of the world and its treachery, I was without suspicion and without prudence. In despite of education I possessed a feeling heart, and a sprightliness which not even the conventional gloom of a boarding-school was able to damp.

“ I had not been at home two years before my father, who had engaged in large concerns, was declared a bankrupt. Our family were obliged to retire into the country, and I found that the professions of my admirers were not to be depended upon. I soon consoled myself for their defection. Most of my suitors had pleased my ear, but none had touched my heart. I cheerfully retired, with my family, into the obscurity of the country; and some
few

few years of perfect content succeeded. Yet my heart felt a void; I could not analyze my feelings; yet I found that something was essential to my happiness. At length the old rector of the parish died; his successor came to reside in our village, and his presence taught me that my heart had panted for a lover. This gentleman was near thirty, and gifted with a person highly prepossessing. I can scarcely, even now, restrain a tear, when I reflect with what purity I loved him: I thought him worthy my regard; he paid me particular attentions, and I flattered myself that he would make proposals to my father and mother. Repeated oaths and vows of fidelity gave me reason to suppose him sincere, and in a short time I found myself likely to become an unmarried mother."

Edward raised his eyes to the speaker; a single candle threw a gleam across her haggard features: the tones of her voice might have moved compassion, but no traces of emotion marked her countenance.

nance. She recounted her tale as if it had been that of a stranger—her feelings seemed torpid. "This woman," thought Edward, "was once beautiful, was once innocent—Oh! what has he to answer for, who could cause this disgusting change!"

"This circumstance," continued the woman, "I joyfully mentioned to my lover. I, poor, simple girl, thought he would receive the tidings with joy: he appeared thunderstruck, but assuming a cheerful air, he proposed that I should go on a visit to a lady, who lived about forty miles from London, from whence he would take me, as by my father's desire, and make me lawfully his wife. I willingly gave ear to this advice, and waited a month at the lady's without hearing from him. At length my father came himself to fetch me home; I eagerly inquired for Mr. Delvalley, and——"

"Who?" cried Edward, in amazement.

"Per-

"Perhaps I ought not to have mentioned his name," said the wretched woman; "I see you know him."

"How! the Honourable Aubrey Delvalley!"

"Yes!" exclaimed she, forgetting in momentary feeling her late torpitude; "the Honourable! strange abuse of the word! The man who, by repeated perjuries, seduced an innocent girl; who contaminated a once pure heart; who plunged a wretched father into the grave, while curses on his child trembled on his tongue, was the *Honourable* Aubrey Delvalley."

"Villain! villain! but his heart shall be wrung when I inform him of your story. Proceed."

"I inquired for my seducer; but what was my horror when I heard that, during the month I had been absent, he had left England, and was accompanying his sister on a tour to Italy, where it was supposed they would stay for some years, owing to

the declining health of the lady. Guilt, shame, and remorse, overcame me, and I fell senseless to the ground. Alas! when I recovered my senses, the pains I felt told me that my disgraceful situation was no longer a secret. My father stood before me; no more the mild, the indulgent parent: his keen eye darted lightnings through my soul. 'Wretched girl!' cried he, in a terrific voice, (oh! that it had had the power of annihilation!) 'wretched girl! take my curse; never, never will I see you more: you have brought your mother and myself to the grave with dishonour; her curse and mine pursue you.' My father then turned away, and I never saw him more. The mistress of the house left the room, and I was conducted to the bed of a servant in a poor garret. Here I lay struggling between life and death for three weeks: at length, when I was enabled to leave my bed, the lady requested that I would also leave the house; and sent me a fifty pound note,

the

the gift of my father, with orders never to trouble him more.

“ I had an aunt in London ; I resolved to address myself to her : she was reckoned a pious good woman, and I hoped would pity the errors of inexperience ; at least I flattered myself, that in the metropolis I might obtain some employment which, with industry, might enable me to live without being a burden to any. I took a place in the stage, and towards the dusk of the evening found myself in London. Immediately on my arrival I took a hackney coach, and proceeded to the city, where I hoped to find a servant of my mother, who had married from our house when we resided in London. She had married a tradesman, and as she had a great affection for me, I had remembered the place of her residence. The house was at the bottom of a court ; and having paid the coachman, I begged him to bring my little trunk after me. I knocked at the door, which was opened by a female

with a very sour aspect, who gave me the unpleasant information, that the persons I asked for had left the house some months; that their trade did not go on well; and that they had emigrated to America.—

‘There is no danger of our hearing from them again in a hurry,’ said she, ‘for there is a quarter’s rent due.’—She then shut the door in my face. When I returned into the street, what was my surprise to find the coach gone, and no coachman to be seen!—‘You should have taken the number,’ said a bystander who witnessed my distress. The trunk contained not only my wearing apparel, but all my small stock of money, except a few shillings which I had in my pocket; all chance of regaining it was lost; I burst into tears; while a small pittance remained, I had still a straw to grasp; when that pittance failed, I looked around for succour, but found no assistant hand stretched out towards me. I felt myself a desolate being, whose existence was use-
ful

ful to none, and abhorrent to myself. Whither was I to turn? where find a shelter?

“ While I was in this agony of mind, a well-dressed elderly woman approached me, and inquired why I wept. I informed her of my wretched situation; she appeared to pity me, and desiring me to go with her, took me to her house. After a sleepless night, during which I bedewed my pillow with repentant tears, I rose and met my landlady at breakfast; she said, that if I wanted work she would employ me at the needle. I however resolved to visit my aunt, having a faint hope that her pride would revolt at seeing a niece reduced so low; and that, by her means, I might be restored to the bosom of my family. I proceeded with a heavy heart to the house of my relation; I gave a single tap at the door; after waiting above an hour in the hall, I was admitted to an apartment where my aunt was seated on a sofa giving cream to a lapdog. She did

not recollect me. 'Pray young woman,' said she, in a peevish tone, 'what is your urgent business with me?'

"My knees tottered, and my face glowed with the blush of shame."

" 'Pray what do you want?' continued she; 'I suppose you are come to offer yourself for service; but your appearance is no very great recommendation; I don't like the blushing of that pretty face.'

" 'My name,' Madam, said I, 'is — : I am your unfortunate niece.'

"My aunt started from her seat — How, Miss! Do you dare to appear before me? I never, Heaven be thanked, had such an abominable monster in my house before.' She then gave way to a torrent of vituperative language, ill calculated to heal the wounds of my heart, which began to bleed afresh, and, unable to bear up against the acuteness of my feelings, I sunk in a swoon at the feet of my relation."

"When I recovered, she thus addressed me :

me: 'You are, I am sorry from my immortal soul to say, my niece; I therefore wish to know what course you mean to pursue: you cannot expect to be received into any of the virtuous societies I frequent.'

" 'It is not society,' replied I, 'that I seek; I wish merely to be placed in a situation where I may live without dishonouring myself.'

" 'That,' said she, 'you have done already.'

" I went on: 'I have been robbed on my coming to town of the small pittance my father gave me; I am without money and without friends; I thought you, Madam, would have procured me a situation, where, by industry, I might support myself—I wish even to wait on a lady.'

" 'Well,' cried my aunt, after a pause, 'we will see what is to be done; I promise nothing, but insist that you never again put your foot within these doors.'

" I waited not for more, but gave my
address,

address, and took my leave. I was in great hopes that family pride would operate in my favour; but I was deceived. Two days afterwards I received a note from my aunt, in which she, after much violent abuse, told me, that she renounced me for ever, as ladies of my profession seldom chose to follow any other. I could not account for the ambiguity of this expression, but I was soon made to comprehend it, for I found, with horror I found, that the house in which I had taken refuge was the place I ought most to have shunned. I now resolved to give my hostess the slip, but found myself a prisoner in the house; the wretched woman threatened to arrest me for my expenses of board, lodging, and clothes. One evening, after many fruitless attempts, I made my escape, and found myself once more at liberty. I proceeded to an office where servants are hired; my place of abode was asked; but this being known, was a sufficient objection. When I left the office, I perceived that a servant
had

had followed me from my lodgings ; she approached, and with a sneer said, that if I did not turn my *virtuous* feet homewards I should be immediately arrested. I was again conducted to my prison-house, and my landlady grew more explicit ; she extolled my beauty, and bade me hope every thing from that ; she added, that a gentleman of family and fortune would call upon her that evening, and begged me to do all in my power to engage his attention. I perceived her meaning—my soul shrank from the idea ; but I had formed my resolution ; I resolved to throw myself upon the gentleman's generosity, and entreat him to free me from my thralldom.

"The evening came ; my hostess had spared no cost to adorn the victim she meant for sacrifice. I was elegantly dressed, and with shuddering anxiety entered the parlour. The gentleman was not yet come. I sat in silence. Never, never shall I forget my feelings at that moment ; the melancholy ticking of a chamber-clock added a gloom

gloom to my ideas. A loud knock at the door made me jump from my chair. The old woman, frowning, bade me not behave like a baby. The door opened. A gentleman entered the room. He started as he beheld me. I timidly lifted up my eyes towards him; but soon closed them in a swoon, when I beheld Delvalley, whom I had fancied on the continent. On my recovery, I learned that he had, on my fainting, left the house, without giving the slightest token of compassion. Heaven forgive him! Yet perhaps these were the exaggerations of my betrayer. I since learned that Delvalley was on the eve of his journey, and that in a few days he left the kingdom. I lay some time in a dangerous fever; and when health again bloomed on my cheek, I was persecuted by the threats of my hosts. Thus driven to desperation, I began my career of infamy:—a short career! In two years I was no longer the object of attention. In two more I lost all traces
of

of beauty, and was dismissed the house. I was now reduced, as many thousands are, to subsist on precarious bread. To think was a torment; and the noisy revellings of debauchery were a pleasure, whilst they hushed the agonies of reflection. The fair sensations of modesty were soon destroyed, and the wild passions raged at large, uncontrolled by those little decencies which throw a charm even upon criminal love. How have I envied those females, my associates, who, by the bitter blast of winter, were deprived of their existence — a miserable existence, — and whose stiffened corsets no longer felt the pangs of want! I fear death, I know not why; for surely, surely, no state of torment can exceed the present: and I drag on a wretched and loathsome being, as you behold."

Edward now arose, thanked the poor woman for her narration, and declared that Delvalley should do her justice as far as lay in his power. — "It will, however," added

added he, "be necessary to know your name."

"Maria Lawrence," said she.—"But no;—that is the appellation I assumed.—The real name, by which Delvalley will know his victim, is Helen Fitzmaurice."

Had a thunderbolt fallen at the feet of Edward, his surprise had not been greater. "How! what said you? Who? Say it again—quickly!"

"My name is Helen Fitzmaurice."

"Have you not a brother?"

"I had;—but he has doubtless been taught to execrate me."

"You lived in Devonshire?"

"I did. I see you know my family. My father formerly dwelt in Portman Square. On his misfortune he retired to——"

"Helen! My sister!—Gracious Heaven! is it possible? You are then alive, and I——"

"Ha! let me look upon you well," cried she, with a frantic scream.—"Yea,

yes,

yes, it is indeed.—Oh, Edward! curse me not:—pray do not curse me. If you knew what I *have* suffered, what I *do* suffer, you would pity me:—indeed, brother, you would pity me!—Do not, do not curse me!”

Edward raised the suppliant from the ground, on which she had thrown herself.

“Be comforted, Helen; I cannot curse you; but for the villain who——he shall die.”

“Oh, no! Spare him, Edward, spare him: let his heart be its own punisher: do not become guilty, because your sister is so.”

“When came he to your village?” cried Edward, with the wildest emotion.

“Not long after your departure for London.”

“He knew that he had seduced my sister, yet professed a friendship for me! Vile hypocrite! his life shall answer it!”

Helen frantically implored his forbearance: but for some time Edward was deaf to her remonstrances. At length he *en-*
treated

treated her to procure a lodging, and furnished her with money for that purpose. He then hastened to procure a place in the coach, and returned to Mr. Rigby's.

In the greatest agitation, Edward sought his uncle, and begged half an hour's conference. Mr. Rigby said that he had a great affair also to speak of, and led the way to the library, a place little frequented by any but his nephew.

"I have received a visit, Edward," said Mr. Rigby, "from the Honourable and Reverend Mr. Delvalley."

"He is a villain!" exclaimed Edward.

Mr. Rigby, whose temper was not much dulcified by some gouty symptoms, reprimanded his favourite with unusual asperity for his irreverent expression, and asked the reason of his anger.

"Do you know, Sir, that my sister Helen is living?"

"No, I do not. A wicked girl—I know nothing at all about her—I don't want to hear of her."

"You

"You allowed me, Sir, to be ignorant of her existence. I was told by yourself that she died of a rapid decline."

"I did tell you so," said Mr. Rigby coolly; "for you was a child, and might have blabbed the disgrace of our family. If she is alive, let her continue the life she has chosen."

"Do you know, Sir, that she was seduced by Mr. Delvalley?"

"No, I did not know that. That's bad!—But the family is rich.—Don't talk about your sister, but think of yourself: you may marry Miss Delvalley, with sixty thousand pounds, to-morrow morning!"

"I would sooner," exclaimed Edward, "join hands with infamy!"

"How, nephew! is not Miss Delvalley an eligible connexion?"

"Yes, Sir, she is every thing a man could wish; but, independent of our mutual indifference, never would I marry the sister of the man who seduced mine."

"There

"There is no indifference in the case. You are always at the house, and she has eyes to see. Mr. Delvalley has confessed his wishes that the union may take place. What would you have more?"

"That Mr. Delvalley should act every way amiss, I am not surprised," said Edward; "but that he should thus commit his sister, passes the bounds of illiberality. The connexion, Sir, I must positively decline. But Helen's situation now claims my care:—she is——"

"Mr. Fitzmaurice," said Rigby, enraged, "I have but one word to say:—you marry Miss Delvalley in a month, or I shall no longer look upon you as my heir. Your sister was a base girl; and if you favour her with your protection, it shall not be at my expense."

"Sir," replied Edward, "while my sister lives I feel it my duty to protect her. She labours under a father's curse; yet I hope and believe, from what I re-

member of my father, that he did not, on the approach of death, confirm it:—a father could not.”

“ Sir,” said Rigby, “ your choice is before you. Miss Delvalley, sixty thousand pounds, a seat in Parliament, and my fortune at my death; or poverty and your fine sentiments.”

“ The choice is soon made,” cried Edward. He bowed, and left the house.

Mr. Rigby, enraged, thundered anathemas against his virtuous nephew, and sent his effects to a coffee-house, with a letter, in which he upbraided him as rebellious and unnatural, recapitulated all the favours he had received, and bade him never more to appear before him.

Thus was Edward left destitute. The rapidity of the circumstances which were productive of his fall scarce allowed him time for reflection; but certainly no inducement whatever would have prevailed on him to abandon his penitent sister. Of the three thousand pounds given him
by

by Rigby, two thousand had been settled on Mrs. Fitzmaurice; and the remainder, with a very small reserve, had been lent to a young nobleman, who paid a debt of honour, and shot himself through the head the next day.

Edward, having seen his sister properly accommodated, determined to pursue his plan of visiting his family; hoping, in the affection of his relatives, and the repose of the country, to calm his ruffled temper, and consider his future plans. He still resolved to call Delvalley to a severe account; and no consideration of propriety could restrain his impetuosity, when the idea of a seduced sister struck his mind.

CHAP. IV.

A Mother of a Family—A Misanthrope.

EDWARD had almost forgotten the situation of the village; and a little boy showed the house of Mr. Pobjoy, which was distinguished by a gold pestle and mortar, and a blue board with gold letters, announcing his occupation, over the door.

Edward knocked, and a servant girl appeared, with her arms covered with soap-suds. He was shown into a small parlour; and having given his name, anxiously waited the approach of Anastasia. The parlour plainly evinced that children were its usual inmates. The carpet was littered with cards and shreds of paper; a rocking-horse stood on one side; a rod was hung over the chimney;

and a pap'-boat stood on a stool near the fire-place. Suddenly the cries of children were heard, and a female step descended the stairs. The door flew open, and Edward affectionately embraced Anastasia. After the first congratulations were over, Edward had an opportunity of contemplating his sister. She was dressed in a white bed-gown and coat, neither very clean; and being without stays, her appearance was in the highest degree fluttish. Her fine face was clouded by an anxious frown, and her hair was only to be perceived where it peeped through the holes of her night-cap.

“ Ah, my dear brother,” cried Anastasia, “ how I have longed to see you ! But why did you not come in a post-chaise, or your own equipage ? My mother and the Doctor have walked out to meet you ;— but how could they expect to see you in a stage-coach ? ”

A maid servant now entered the room.

She

She said that Master Neddy was so naughty there was no bearing him.

“ Send the children here,” cried Mrs. Pobjoy: “ I dare say they will be quiet enough with me.”

Three fine children were now brought into the room, and began their infantine gambols. One climbed up Edward's knee, and cried to have his watch; the other got upon the rocking-horse; while the third hung upon the mother. Edward, though he loved the society of children, could at this time have dispensed with their presence. He gently informed Anastatia, fearing to hurt her feelings, that her sister yet lived.

“ Does she indeed?” cried Anastatia, without taking her eyes from a worsted stocking she had begun to mend. “ Dear! I am very sorry for it! It would be a blessing for her, poor soul, to die!”

“ Anastatia! surely *you* did not know that she survived the discovery of her shame!”

“ Oh yes, I did : my aunt wrote all about it from London ; and a pretty spot of work it was. My father repented ~~badly~~ having driven her from him, and never looked up after. Indeed, my father was so weak as to be willing to forgive her ; and if it had not been for Mr. Pobjoy we might have had her again amongst us. Only think ! to forgive her after her abominable conduct !——Neddy, don't make such a noise, or I'll send you to Susan directly.”

“ Good heavens !” exclaimed Edward, “ can it be you, Anastatia, that speaks ? —Had it not been for your husband she might have been forgiven !—Is this the good humane man you told me of ?”

“ Don't be severe upon Pobjoy,” cried Anastatia : “ he is a very good man ; it is unknown the money he gives away to the poor ; he would not commit a vagabond for the world ; he never sees a horse in a pound but he flings him some hay, or a pig in a gate that he does not stop to

extricate. To be sure, he was obliged to hang Timothy Graves for stealing a lamb; but the fellow was such a rogue, that he must have been hanged some time or other, and the Doctor was of opinion that the day was immaterial.—Mary, I'll whip you if you make mouths at your brother. Bless me, if the clock was to strike, your face would remain so, and there would be a pretty spot of work.—My father, I am sorry to say, took the affair too much to heart; for he died in less than three months after."

"He was not well," said Edward, "when I left him; but I doubt not the shock hastened his death."

"Why, to tell you the truth, Edward," replied Anastasia, "I think it was more the remembrance of having given Helen his curse; though I cannot see what particular harm that could do her. The fact is, my father's brain was turned; and he was continually talking about Helen's ghost, and that his forgiveness came too

late. I shall never forget the morning before his death. He came into the parlour where I was working my baby-clothes:—‘Anastatia, child,’ said he, ‘I have been talking to Helen. She has forgiven me, poor dear girl! She is in heaven now, Anastatia!—She has forgiven me indeed; but my heart is broke.—I cursed the poor child; but she has forgiven me that, Anastatia.’—I declare, Edward, I cried so that——Mary, keep your fingers out of the butter, do! Lord bless me, children, you are always in mischief, I think!”

“And my father died soon after this?”

“Yes, he was found dead in the fish-pond next morning.”

“Heavens and earth!” exclaimed Edward, “what do you tell me! This is the cursed work of your humane husband!—Never let me hear his name mentioned. Helen might have been forgiven, and my father might have lived, had it not been for his cursed counsel.”

“Why,

“Why, Pobjoy could not help my father’s falling into the pond, could he?—There was a verdict of Accidental death. But if you are angry with my husband, Edward, I hope you will not forsake my children. Here is Neddy, who was named after you : can you have the heart to forsake him?—Come here, Neddy, and let me wipe your nose. Don’t scratch your head, that’s a dear.”

Edward, unable to converse longer, turned to the piano-forte, and begged his sister to favour him by playing a lesson. Anastatia opened her eyes, as if doubting the request to be serious. At length, with a half laugh, she exclaimed, “Bless you, brother! do you think I have nothing better to do than that? Besides, it is all out of tune, and the children have quite spoiled it. I don’t believe I have played twice since I lay in of Neddy. No, no; the nursery and the servants find me employment enough, I assure you. Besides,

what

what has a married woman to do with music?"

At this moment Mrs. Fitzmaurice and Pobjoy entered the room. After much congratulation, Edward renewed the subject, which their arrival had interrupted. Mrs. Fitzmaurice consented to forgive her penitent daughter; and Anastatia even promised to pay her a private visit. Edward, unwilling to expose Helen to reproaches or ill-timed consolation, did not immediately inform his family where he had placed her. Mrs. Fitzmaurice inquired after her brother; and the family sat down to a dinner badly cooked and half cold. The children were at table; and their little hands quickly found their way into every body's plate but their own. One cried for under-crust, and the other because his brother was helped before him. The uproar became general, till Pobjoy, rising from the table, took down the rod, and very deliberately whipt one, and put the other

other in the corner. The girl, fearful that her turn was coming next, in attempting to avoid *dada*, overturned her plate in Edward's bosom, and climbed upon her mother's knee, who rocked her backwards and forwards, singing "Hush-baby, baby, the beggars are coming to town." The screams of the affrighted children, the rage of Pobjoy, the singing of Anastatia, the barking of two large spaniels, and the pacific attempts of the grandmother (who, to restore quiet, made more noise than all put together), formed such a hideous concert, that Edward almost fancied himself in Bedlam.

Order was at length restored: the children were sent out of the room to play; and Edward, after some preparatory conversation, informed them of the estrangement of his uncle's affection.

A gloom pervaded the features of all at this unwelcome intelligence. — "Oh dear!" said Anastatia (while she put down a bunch of currants she was carrying to her mouth),

mouth), "how sorry I am! And there was I recommending Neddy to your protection!"

"Upon my word, I am quite shocked!" exclaimed Pobjoy. "This is very surprising! In my opinion, you were much to blame—very much to blame indeed!"—He threw himself back in his chair.

"Lord blefs me!" cried Mrs. Fitzmaurice, "if I did not always say you would do some filly thing or other! This is the most unfortunate day of my life! My husband's losses were nothing, as it were, in comparison to this!—To be sure it was very good of you, Edward (and I always said so), to settle that money on me; but if you had played your cards well, you might have had all my brother's fortune. I dare say what I can spare will not keep your groom for a month;—but I'll do what I can for you, and that is but little, Heaven knows!"

"I never said," observed Pobjoy, "but that it was very properly done to settle the
money

money in such a manner. It was the wisest act of your life; or it would have been all fooled away, like the rest."

"What do you mean, Sir?" said Edward sternly.

"I mean no harm, Mr. Fitzmaurice; but I may speak my mind. In my opinion, you had better ask your good uncle's pardon. He acted very properly, as far as I can see, in blaming you for affording protection to a bad woman. My mother-in-law may do as she pleases; but my wife, upon second thoughts, shall not encourage wickedness."

"Indeed," said Mrs. Fitzmaurice, "indeed, Edward, you are much to blame in this business. You might have humoured my brother, who is old, and protected, if you pleased, your sister in private."

"Ay," said Anastatia, "and have spoken ill of her before my uncle, to put him in a good temper with you. Dear

me, Edward! you have not acted with common prudence!"

Edward was cut to the soul by the speeches of his mother and sister. Mrs. Fitzmaurice began to weep, and Pobjoy advised her to take some hartshorn drops. She retired for that purpose; and the apothecary became so very provokingly consequential, that Edward, whose mind was too irritable at the moment to bear contradiction, rose, and in a contemptuous tone said, "Mr. Pobjoy, a truce with advice. By your repeated invitation I came to this house, and in it I experience a reception which I surely do not merit. My mother and sister are disposed to consider my conduct in a reprehensible point of view. In their present state of mind I cannot be a welcome guest. I will therefore only observe to you, that could I stoop to flattery and meanness for affluence and protection, I should show myself a rascal undeserving of both. Sir, I shall no longer be an intruder."

"Oh,

“ Oh, Sir, your most obedient humble servant,” cried Pobjoy. “ Fine airs you give yourself, Sir !”——But Edward was out of hearing. He left the house, and walked to the inn. His apparent serenity arose from agony of mind. His heart was formed for affection. Where he most had reason to expect it, it had eluded his grasp. Hearing that no stage would set off till the next-day, he strolled to a wood at some distance from the village, where he threw himself on the ground, and, in the ebullition of his rage, exclaimed aloud, “ Damn the world !”

“ Amen, with all my heart,” cried a voice near him.

Edward started up. An elderly man stood before him: his temples and the upper part of his head were bald, and the few remaining locks were silver white: his eyes were dark and piercing, and a habit of thinking was expressed in the furrows of his severe countenance. He was dressed

ressed in a plain brown suit of clothes, and carried a large oaken stick in his hand.

"Who are you?" cried Edward. "How dare you intrude upon my privacy?"

"This wood is free to all," said the stranger. "I ask no man's leave to frequent what is as much mine as his. You execrated the world:—have not I a right to do the same? You are a young cynic,—I am an old one. Let us be better acquainted."

Edward was struck by the blunt manners of the stranger.—"That we may be acquainted," said he, "I must know your name."

"My name is Withers.—Do you know me now?"

"It does not give me much information," cried Edward; "yet I think I heard the name mentioned once or twice by the village apothecary."

"What! by Pobjoy! that grinning son of medicine—the humane man, who
spares

sparing the flea that bites him, yet hangs the poor wretch who, pressed by want and the cries of a starving family, tremblingly dares to do wrong!"

"You have described him," said Edward.

"Did he not," continued Withers, "give you my birth, parentage, and education, life, character, and behaviour, as hawkers do of wretches condemned to the scaffold? He knows me not; but calumny and ill-nature will always find materials for the biographer. Yet why do I revile him? He does no more than what is daily practised in this best of all possible worlds—a world where selfishness and folly walk hand in hand, and virtue is known but by name."

Edward felt himself relieved by these invectives against a world he began to abhor, and accepted the blunt invitation of Withers, of passing some hours at his cottage. They strolled through the wood, and the old man knocked at the door of
a neat

a neat habitation. An old servant in livery opened it, and asked if his master would want his farther services that day. "Perhaps," was the laconic reply; and the two gentlemen walked into the parlour. A small bookcase was the only ornament; and Edward observed, among others, the writings of Voltaire and Volney. Zimmerman on Solitude lay open upon the table.

"You are soured by disappointments," said the old man, fixing his penetrating eyes on Edward:—"perhaps are surrounded by difficulties. When these vanish, you will again believe the professions of a deceitful world, and be again deceived."

"You have guessed right: I am involved in difficulties, and the prey of disappointment; but I feel more for another than myself."

"A mistress, on my life!" exclaimed Withers. "Feel for others! Have others felt for you?—No.—Be then a man, or rather, be more:—creep into a corner,
and

and shut your eyes on a villanous world! Live for yourself, as the toad exists in fallen independence, cased in the bosom of the rock."

The curiosity of Edward was excited to know the history of his entertainer. His language and appearance announced no common character. He gave several oblique hints of his wish to know him better; and Withers at length pretended no longer to misunderstand him. "I am a man," said the cynic, "who in early life felt the oppressive hand of power. I was gay and thoughtless; my fortune was soon dissipated; my friends fleeced me; my mistress proved a jilt. I collected the scattered remains of my once large property, and determined to fix my residence at no particular spot. I am continually moving from place to place. I love nobody—I am beloved by nobody. I am independent of the world, and I hate it. I hate, though I would not injure,

jure, my fellow-creatures. I wish society were better constituted; but, like most wishes, I find this chimerical. I laugh at the modern philosopher, who foresees a reform in the moral world, convinced that vice is too deeply rooted in the heart of man ever to be eradicated by argument. From your appearance, I see you are what is called a gentleman. You have taken a disgust to the world. Pursue the bent of your mind. I am poor, yet permit me to accompany you wherever you go.—You start! Is it my poverty which deters you from accepting my offer?"

Edward now apprehended that the intellects of Mr. Withers were not a little deranged. He coolly declined the proposal, assuring him, that though his company had given him much pleasure, his own circumstances were in so precarious a state, that it was impossible for him to mix with any society whatever.

"Were my circumstances," said Mr. Withers,

Withers, "such as to enable me to live independent of all, would you bear me as an acquaintance?"

Edward assured him that his acquaintance would do him honour and pleasure.

"Vain, absurd compliment!" exclaimed Withers. "In the opinion of the multitude it might: for who but would be honoured by the acquaintance of a man of seven thousand a year?"

Edward started.—The old man continued—"Yes, I am rich; but to what purpose? You may bid me rear a church, to endow a lazy luxurious priest; give away my superfluous wealth to wretches who would add numbers to the list of the ungrateful; or build a palace for a foolish heir to enjoy.—But no: I live for myself alone. Yet sometimes I have the weaknesses of humanity.—I see your hatred of the world: I will confirm you in it. I will watch over and guard you from any folly, which might tend to recall you to scenes you have so justly execrated. Pass
this

this night in my cottage: to-morrow we go to London. Having settled all affairs at that emporium of vice and folly, let us retire to a barren mountain, rail at society, and curse ourselves as forming a part."

These sentiments would, at any other time, have excited the pity of Edward; but now they so well accorded with his feelings, that he willingly acceded to the proposal. He retired early to his bed, but not to rest: his perturbed mind would not permit sleep to visit his eyelids. A sonnet, translated by himself from the Italian of a friend, was brought to his recollection, and he could not help mentally repeating it.

SONNET.

The wintry morn comes on: its gloom conveys
A sorrow to the mind. The future storm
Howls on the distant hill; the waste displays
Full many a dreary and mishapen form.

At

At noon the sun, from out a wat'ry cloud,
Shoots a reluctant ray:—ere priz'd 't is flown:
And now the tempest, warring keen and loud,
In all the horror of its force is known.
Night drops her veil, and drifting far and wide,
The snow descends. The trav'ler shrinks with fear:
No hospitable dome, no shelter near.
He would, but cannot, fly.—Eugenio sigh'd,
Compell'd, unhappy moralist, to say,
The life of man, alas! is but a wintry day.

CHAP. V.

Ingratitude and Love.

WHEN Mr. Withers and Edward arrived in London, they took a lodging in Park Street. During the journey, the old man had, by his artful questions, gathered every information of the circumstances which had occasioned the disturbance of Edward when he first saw him. The cynic smiled with bitterness at the idea of the punishment of Delvalley, yet condemned the eagerness of Edward to call him to account: "for," said he, "were all such villains exterminated, how many noble and honourable personages would suffer in the proscription!"

A challenge was written, and Withers vainly remonstrated. The morning was devoted to conversation, chiefly turning

on the villany of mankind. In the evening an answer was returned from Delvalley, purporting that he would not fail to be at the place appointed.

Edward now reflected that the small remaining property he possessed would devolve to the children of Anastatia, should the duel prove fatal to him. He hastily wrote a will, bequeathing the whole to his eldest sister, provided she would fix her residence in Wales. He then went to her lodgings; and his behaviour, though affectionate, was so perturbed, that Helen perceived that some particular uneasiness agitated his bosom. Her manners did not please her brother: indeed they were so tainted by the wretched company she had associated with, that, although she strove to repress it, a vein of vulgarity would sometimes appear. This Edward could not but perceive, as well as that her health declined. She had laid aside her trappings of infamy, and appeared in a plain cotton gown. Her figure was faded, and,

and, though not yet thirty, she appeared ten or twelve years older. Edward gave her his address, and took leave. The next morning, leaving his uneasy pillow, Edward walked towards Kennington Common, a place which, Mr. Withers informed him, would ever live in the annals of modern honour and the Newgate Calendar.

In his letter Edward had informed Delvalley that he should be unaccompanied, and was not a little surprised at finding a third person at the place of appointment.

Delvalley approached.—“ I have injured you, Mr. Fitzmaurice,” said he ; “ I am here to acknowledge it, and humble myself before you. It ill becomes a man of my order to reach out an arm of destruction. If, however, you will only listen to your just anger, I am willing to gratify it. You told me you should be unaccompanied ; I have therefore brought Captain Ainslie to act as mediator, or witness

witness that neither of our actions disgrace the man of honour."

"Of honour!" exclaimed Edward; "but I come not to talk:—take your ground, Sir."

Delvalley looked mournfully.—"Be it so," said he. The colour faded from his lips, and a cold dew overspread his forehead.

Captain Ainslie measured the ground; but before Edward could fire, he observed that the pistols had *sights*, which was an advantage. A change was agreed upon, and Delvalley had no sooner received one of Edward's pistols, than he started, and begged to speak before they proceeded to extremities.

"Where," said Delvalley, "did you get these weapons?"

"This, Sir, is trifling," replied Edward; "to what purpose do you ask?"

"I do not trifle with you:—but tell me how they came into your possession."

"Not longer to delay," cried Edward,

"I will inform you, that I attempted to save a gentleman from assassination near Rome.—I was wounded in the struggle, and when at daybreak I came to myself, I found these pistols in the field."

"They were mine ! they were mine !" exclaimed Delvalley. "Banditti attacked the carriage in which my sister and myself were seated—I sprung from it, was wounded by them, and dropt these pistols. The darkness of the night prevented my distinguishing friends from foes ; but the villains fled, and I was conveyed to Rome, fainting from loss of blood. I now find that I owe my life to your generous interference, and can I consent to lift my hand against you ? No ! Take my life, which I willingly sacrifice ; but spare me the horror of being worse than an assassin."

Captain Ainslie now interfered. Delvalley begged him to propose any terms. He declared that his behaviour to Miss Fitzmaurice had preyed upon his mind ;
and

and if the gift of his fortune could atone for his crime, he would immediately offer it : but added, that nothing should tempt him to another mode of reparation.

Edward paused. The repentance of Delvalley seemed sincere. Had Helen's mind been uncorrupted, he would have insisted on their immediate marriage : as affairs now stood, he was in a state of uncertainty. At length he said—

“ Mr. Delvalley, I once, it appears, saved your life ; I will not now become your executioner. Never let me see you more. I will retire with my sister from a world I abhor, and in obscurity will endeavour to forget the flattering prospect my youthful ideas created.”

“ How ! ” exclaimed Delvalley ; “ is it then as I have heard ?—tell me, Mr. Fitzmaurice—I conjure you to tell me, have you fallen under the displeasure of your uncle ? ”

“ I am justified,” cried Edward bitterly, “ in wounding your feelings, if in-

deed they yet inhabit your bosom.—Yes, Mr. Delvalley, my uncle renounced me for espousing the cause of the woman you ruined and abandoned! See now, see and tremble at the misery you have occasioned. A deserving girl is reduced to indigence and infamy;—a father driven to madness, despair, and self-destruction; and his son thrown from the bosom of his family!—These, these are the consequences of what is termed *juvenile indiscretion*. This misery you could create—this ruin you could spread around; and yet, Sir, you may have slept while the bitter tear coursed down the cheek of your victims! You would not *hold out an arm of destruction*! Oh shame! what destruction have you not heaped on my head!—the weapon of the assassin were mercy in comparison.”

Delvalley and Edward stood opposite to each other; and while the former bent his repentant eyes to the ground, an emaciated

ciated female figure rushed wildly between them.

"Spare him, spare my brother!" cried she with a frantic scream; "Delvalley, Delvalley, you must not, you will not, surely, kill him—be satisfied with the wrongs you have done me; for those I forgive you, and may Heaven forgive you: but to the seduction of the sister, add not the murder of the brother!"

If Delvalley was before in a state of agitation, what were now his feelings? He fell upon one knee to the withered form of Helen, and raised the pistol he held to his temples. Ainslie forcibly disarmed him, and Helen fell into her brother's arms in a swoon.

"Look at her, Sir," cried Edward; "this emaciated countenance once bloomed with health, and was irradiated by the blush of modesty. She once could weep for the woes of others—her own griefs cannot now draw down a tear. Behold this

wreck of loveliness, and confess yourself a villain."

"Your reprehension is just," said Captain Ainslie; "but would you urge a penitent to desperation? Let me, Sir, entreat you to retire. The coach which conveyed us hither, waits at a short distance from the turnpike. Permit me to convey Miss Fitzmaurice."

"I thank you, Sir," replied Edward; "I may have been wrong, but in a moment like this, the mind cannot always be guarded. Come, my Helen; the world abandons you, but your brother's heart is open to penitence." He bowed to Ainslie; and lifting his still lifeless sister in his arms, left the spot.

No sooner were they out of sight than Ainslie, bursting into a loud laugh, exclaimed, "I think we have *queered* young Sentiment pretty decently."

"I think so too," cried Delvalley, while he wiped his forehead; "but confound

found it, I almost began to think myself in earnest."

"The devil you did?—We shall have you sermonizing by and by. I should not suspect you of much compunction, Reverend Sir, after all I have seen."

"Yes, Ainslie; but when I found he had saved my life, I could not but feel my conscience give me a cursed twinge."

"What! I suppose you would persuade me that you really meant to blow your sapient brains out—faith, if such had been your intention, I would not have baulked your humour."

"Why that," said Delvalley, "would have been carrying the joke a little too far;—but I'm glad 'tis over, at all events. My clerical character remains unspotted—I may yet look up to a bishopric. To secure my hopes, I must ruin Fitzmaurice: if the world are not persuaded he is a rascal, they will, I fear,

affix the name on me.—I wish any body else had saved my life, though.”

“Confound your scruples,” cried Ainslie; “how could you be so ridiculous as to say you would *not* marry the girl?—he did not hint at such a thing, and why did you wish to put it in his head?”

“There is no accounting for any thing a man may do in a moment of fear. You may say what you will, Ainslie, but it is very awkward to stand before a loaded pistol; particularly when you are convinced a man is in earnest about blowing your brains out. If I had not been sure that the old loan-contractor had disinherited Fitzmaurice, I would have married the girl to-morrow.”

“Indeed!”

“Yes, indeed I would—I would marry the very essence of deformity and vice, if money were not wanting. I am not to be tied to the apron-string of a wife.”

“Very true,” said Ainslie; “let the French

French sing, '*Vive le vin, vive l'amour*;' I say, '*Vive l'argent*,' which can procure us one as well as the other. But how will your sister take the news of the fellow's poverty?"

"Just like the rest of her sex—open her eyes, and find two hundred and fifty thousand faults, which were veiled by the lustre of two hundred and fifty thousand pounds. My sister is a woman, is she not?"

"Yes," replied Ainslie, "and an uncommon woman. She loves this Fitzmaurice, and will have him in spite of his poverty."

"Not if I can help it," exclaimed Delvalley; "either my character or his must go to wreck, and I cannot balance in the choice.—But what could bring that foolish distracted wench here? I believe Fitzmaurice to be a man of spirit, and one who would not trifle in an affair of this sort. I thought he would have been satisfied with an apo-

logy; but there is no trusting these men of sentiment—the gentleman was in earnest.”

Ainslie could account for Helen's sudden appearance no other way than by attributing it to a preconcerted scheme between Fitzmaurice and his sister. “The fellow,” said he, “has the reputation of courage, but has it ever been tried? I'll be sworn he had no more idea of fighting, than, to say the truth, we had ourselves.”

These well-matched companions were both deceived. They rashly judged of Fitzmaurice by their own standard. He was a man of cool deliberate courage, tempered with a compassionate softness. His surprise at the appearance of his sister was as great as theirs. Delicacy prevented him from renewing a subject so ungrateful to her feelings, and the idea of which he wished to obliterate from his mind; for he was convinced of the turpitude of duelling, and was shocked

to

to think he had been so great a slave to his passions. The day on which Edward visited his sister, she perceived that his agitation was more than common. She sent to his servant, desiring him to watch her brother, for her penetrating mind had readily guessed the truth. The man, who had a real affection for his master, though he had been but a short time in his service, ventured to read a letter which was left in the pocket of one of the coats he was brushing. This letter was the challenge. Fearing to incur his master's anger should he apply to the police, the man communicated the affair to Helen, who fortunately arrived time enough to prevent an affray.

Delvalley and Ainslie, as they walked homewards, engaged in a serious conversation relative to their future plans of operation. The clerical paragon was to influence the mind of Augusta in the Captain's favour, for which he was to receive

five thousand pounds on the day of marriage.

While the interested Delvalley was forming schemes for the advancement of his fortune, Augusta's heart was torn by a thousand new sensations:—that Edward should quit London without the common attention of taking leave, stung her to the quick. She now felt she loved him with ardour. His large fortune, she imagined, had, by flattering his vanity, extinguished the softer affections of the heart. She wished him poor, that her disinterested love might shine in its full purity; and was only restrained from avowing her affection by the consideration of his superior wealth.

Miss Delvalley was sitting one evening with her friend and companion, Miss Ormerode, when her brother entered the room. He had just risen from dinner, and, though not intoxicated, was in that state wherein a man respects neither the
secrets

secrets of others nor his own. Indeed Delvalley seldom allowed himself to pass the bounds of temperance in *drinking*, not from choice but prudence. "Augusta, my dear," cried he, "why is that pretty face so gloomy? upon my life you looked charmingly to-day, and from a brother a civil thing may have truth on its side. If you do not credit me, perhaps you will Captain Ainslie, who has absolutely driven me away by his encomiums on your beauty."

"Pray, Aubrey, have you heard any thing of your friend Fitzmaurice?" said Augusta; "it is surely very strange that he never calls to see you."

"Fitzmaurice! Phaw! the fellow is mad, I believe, and on the point of marriage with a country squire's daughter, not half a degree better than a milkmaid."

"On the point of marriage?" faintly repeated Augusta.

"Yes, and it is the best thing he can

do : she has a snug little fortune, and he is not worth a shilling."

"Indeed, Aubrey, I fear your wine is rather potent," said Augusta, laughing at her ready fears ; "the heir of Mr. Rigby not worth a shilling !"

"No, no ! his bad conduct has cut off all expectations from that quarter. He certainly behaved very ill to his benefactor : I hate ingratitude, Augusta, and have broken off all connexion with him."

"But what is his crime, Aubrey ? He is incapable of a base action—I am sure he is : I dare vouch for his innocence. His open countenance is the throne of honour : a villain cannot counterfeit the steady glance of virtue."

Delvalley cast his eyes to the ground, raised them to the ceiling, walked to the window, and at length threw himself into a chair, while the blush of consciousness overspread his features.

"He ought to be proud, Augusta, in having

having you for his champion. But what will Ainslie say to all this?"

"Ainslie!" repeated Augusta.

"Yes; I am much deceived if he is not one of your warmest admirers—I am sure he is the most deserving."

"But what is the crime of Edward?"

"I will not shock you, my love, by repeating it."

"Let me then guess at what you allude to," cried Augusta, with warmth.

"Has he, by perjury, ruined the peace of a family, and seduced some fond believing girl?"

Augusta looked sternly at her brother—Such is the faculty of guilt to fear detection, that Delvalley fancied himself discovered.

"Who told you this?" cried he, faltering.

"What do you mean, Aubrey?—Your looks alarm me—I merely guessed at the crime of Edward."

"True, true: Faith, Augusta, that claret

claret I ordered last is abominable stuff; it makes me quite nervous.—Be satisfied that Fitzmaurice is a villain: I will drop his acquaintance. I wonder what keeps Ainslie so long below. Is he not a fine young fellow, Augusta?"

"Why will you talk of him, Aubrey? If you would oblige me, tell me the crime of Edward."

"Come, come, sister, I see how it is: that sneaking rascal, Fitzmaurice, has won your heart."

"I thank you for your compliment, Sir; a sneaking rascal, as you elegantly express yourself, is not calculated to engage the affections of your sister."

"Pray, my dear girl, don't be queer; Fitzmaurice is as poor as a Welsh curate; Ainslie is not rich, indeed, but has all the virtues that adorn a man; if Fitzmaurice's person is the Apollo Belvidere, Ainslie moves a Hercules."

"Aubrey," cried Augusta, rising, "I will no longer listen to you: I am loth
to

to suspect a brother of duplicity, but I fear all is not right. I will myself write to Edward. You say I love him—I own it; I glory in it, and I will let him know my love. He is innocent of this nameless crime on which you seem to lay such stress. I will not believe that he is on the point of marriage. He loves me—or he shall love me. Yes, I will win the heart which is yet steeled by indifference. Your friend Ainslie has my thanks for his good opinion; but, should he be explicit to you, you are authorized to say that your sister has no longer a heart to give; and her hand and heart are inseparable.”

She then left the room, Miss Ormerode following; and Delvalley returned to the dining-parlour, little satisfied with the event of his schemes.

CHAP. VI.

A Lady's Mistake.

AUGUSTA had no sooner retired to her own apartment, than she sat down to write to the man she most loved. She began—tore the unfinished sheet—and began again. At length, turning to Miss Ormerode, “Tell me, dear girl,” cried she, “what to say.—But no.—Your delicacy cannot approve of the step I am about to take. To act as I do, you must love as I do.”

Selina Ormerode was the daughter of a colonel, who, dying with little but honour, left a wife and three children without provision. Death, however, kindly abridged the sufferings of the widow and two eldest girls, who fell victims to the small-

small-pox; and Selina, after escaping with difficulty from the same dreadful malady, was taken under the protection of her aunt Mrs. Beddome, who soon after placed her as companion with a Mrs. Prentice. This lady was a woman of fashion, and, like many other women of fashion, very partial to *crème de vanille et noyau*. She was subject to hysteric affections; and though her servants often declared that Madam *had got her dose*, she would have been very sorry to have heard it the public talk. But if it had (as a woman of fashion may do any thing), no person with any pretensions to *ton* would presume to cavil at her conduct.

Miss Ormerode, however, was by no means *tonnish*, and found her situation very irksome. Miss Delvalley having witnessed Selina's patient sufferings, relieved her from her thralldom, by making her the offer of a residence in Sackville Street.

Independent of her face, which was
not

not a little disfigured by the small-pox, the person of Miss Ormerode was not of the first order. It was not, however, strikingly disagreeable, though rather short and inelegant. But when she smiled, an air of sweetness would pervade her features; and when any man had been half an hour in her company, her personal defects would be totally lost in the admiration of her good sense.

Augusta, after many attempts, wrote the important letter, and gave it to Selina for perusal.

“ It is with grief that I hear reports to the disadvantage of any : judge then how I am afflicted when persons I esteem are the objects of calumny.—I have heard of your estrangement from your uncle : I am sorry for it. Yet gifted as you are with every qualification of the heart, the smile of fortune must be a matter of indifference.—Is it your opinion, Edward, that the loss of your wealth has
changed

changed the sentiments of regard I entertain in your favour? Learn to know me better.—My brother leaves London tomorrow, for his living.—Perhaps the world may deem my conduct improper, in wishing to see you in his absence; but I despise the cold maxims of prudence, when they interfere with the dearer interests of the heart. I shall be at home to none but you; and prepare to be chidden for your unkind desertion of those who esteem you.

“AUGUSTA DELVALLEY.”

Sackville Street.

Selina, having read the letter, returned it to her friend, and, with a sigh, observed, that Mr. Fitzmaurice must indeed be unfeeling, not to acknowledge the purity of her disinterested love; but added, that it would be difficult to know where to address the letter, as Edward no longer lived at Mr. Rigby's.—This was an obstacle Augusta had not foreseen.

She

She paused for a moment; and at length, ringing the bell, ordered a servant to take the letter to Piccadilly, and make every inquiry. The servant was, by Mr. Rigby's porter, directed to the coffee-house where the effects of Edward were sent, after the final rupture between him and his uncle; and when the messenger entered the coffee-room, he fortunately beheld Edward at the bar, where he was inquiring if any letters had been left for him. It is not an easy task to depict the astonishment which took possession of his mind on perusing the lines traced by the trembling hand of Augusta.—She, then, loved him!—He had unwittingly encouraged her passion—a passion he could not return: for though her many brilliant qualities had conciliated his respect and admiration, his heart had as yet been insensible to the power of love. To a delicate mind, the charms of person and brilliancy of talent are not sufficient inducements to form an indissoluble union.

Love

Love requires more:—it requires those sensations which will exist when time has chased the loves and graces, and when talent shrinks from the chilling blasts of neglect.

Edward hastily returned to his lodging, where he found Withers employed in reading an anti-ministerial pamphlet; not that he particularly approved of the matter, but because its virulent invective accorded with his cynical turn. Without speaking, Edward laid the letter he had received before the old man, who, when he had read it, smiled sarcastically, and again betook himself to his pamphlet.

Edward, half laughing, begged to know his opinion.

“That women are deceitful, and men credulous. What, I suppose this Mrs. Delvalley is the wife of one of your friends.—But go on.—Would that my business were settled, and I safe out of this righteous town!—I foresee I shall have a lonely journey.”

"You mistake," said Edward. "Do you not remember the name?—This lady is the sister of the treacherous Deivalley."

"How! the rich Miss Delvalley!—She knows your poverty, yet courts your acquaintance! By heaven, she is a noble girl. Her conduct merits——Ha, ha, ha, that I should be a momentary dupe!"

"Wherefore?" cried Edward. "She is an amiable woman, and merits a heart wholly devoted to her. Does not her present conduct prove her disinterested soul?"

"You are a tolerably handsome fellow," said Withers, with an arch non-chalance.

"How can you thus attribute the purest actions to the basest motives? You see the world with a jaundiced eye, Mr. Withers."

"If," said the cynic sternly, "the bloom of health which now dyes your cheeks, were dissipated by disease; if the symmetry of your person were to be distorted

torted by a hump, or your left leg mourn the loss of its companion, where then would your innamorata's passion take its flight?—Milton has drawn the paradise of fools with the pen of a master."

"You would advise me, then, not to see Miss Delvalley?"

"I would advise you to do just as you think proper—as all men do who ask the advice of others."

"Upon my honour, you wrong me. I am at a loss how to act. Guide, advise me."

"Take, then, no notice of this romantic letter, but prepare for your retirement from mankind."

"Good heavens, Mr. Withers! how can you propose such a line of conduct? I will not so far forget the dictates of propriety, as to insult by neglect where I cannot heal by acquiescence."

"I knew you would follow your own way," said Withers drily; "but pray do not interrupt me now; for I am engaged

with an author who takes a great deal of pains to prove that we are a ruined nation. I love to be told we are ruined. I have been told so every day for half a century. There is certainly a philosophic pleasure in it."

Withers now betook himself to his book with the most mortifying sang froid.

Edward, highly provoked, seized his hat, and walked towards the Park. He began to dislike the company of Withers. His manners were so repulsive, and his conversation so bitterly sarcastic, that a man of penetration might conceive his hatred of the world to arise more from the affectation of singularity than fixed principle. The idea of Augusta, nevertheless, predominated in Edward's mind; and he felt quite at a loss how to act. He strolled on, without caring whither he went; and at length flung himself on a bench, where he sat musing.

He was roused from his reverie by the barking of a dog; and looking towards
the

the little animal, who fawned at his feet, he beheld the favourite lapdog of Miss Delvalley. He started up, and at a small distance perceived Miss Ormerode, attended by a footman. His eye met hers. He advanced towards her, and stammered an inquiry after her health.

Miss Ormerode bowed to the compliment, and both walked on in silence.

Edward's brain was on the rack. He dared not ask after Miss Delvalley:—he knew not what to say. At length he ventured an unmeaning observation on the weather, which was far from relieving his mind, as he found he had complained of the heat, while Miss Ormerode was wrapt in a pelisse, and secured from the cold by a muff and tippet.

Selina pitied his confusion; yet, willing to oblige her friend and protectress, ventured timidly to inquire why he was no longer a visitor in Sackville Street.

He replied, that important business had detained him in the country; and that he

could not tell how soon he should again be obliged to leave London.

Selina could now no longer restrain the impulse of curiosity. "The important business," said she, smiling, "is not of so secret a nature but it has found its way into the newspapers."

This was the device of Delvalley, who had inserted several paragraphs in the daily prints, concerning a marriage of Edward likely to take place. These, he thought, would exasperate Augusta against him; but she had treated them with contempt. She would not credit such reports of a man she thought attached to her. The first sight of these falsehoods gave her a transient pain; but she too well knew her own perfections to dread a competitor. Besides, newspaper chit-chat was what she had been accustomed to see, as some had often declared that the Honourable Augusta Delvalley was to be led to the temple of Hymen by the Duke of A. the Marquis of B. the Earl of C. Lord D.

&c.

&c. &c. when perhaps she had scarcely noticed them in a mixed company.

Edward was surprised at the observation of Miss Ormerode. The idea of his *sister* immediately occurred; and he begged her to explain her meaning.

"It was reported," said Selina, blushing, "that you left town on the account of a lady."

"It is true, Madam," said Edward: "I did leave town on that account; yet I did not think scandal had been so busy. The unfeeling may blame me; but I blush not to own that I love, and ever shall love, the lady who caused my departure. My life would I lay down to serve her: my expectations I have already forfeited on her account. My uncle, guided by the prejudices of the world, insisted on my abandoning one whom every duty bound me to protect. I am poor, and must learn to fashion my wishes to my fortunes. I quit the gay scenes of life without a sigh, and hope in retirement

G 3

ment to numb my feelings in stoical apathy."

"You will however see Miss Delvalley?" said Selina, in a low voice, while she endeavoured to hide her tears.

"I will have that honour before I leave town," said Edward, while he handed Miss Ormerode into the carriage, which was waiting for her. She bowed her head, and the chariot drove away. Edward hastily regained his own apartment, in which he locked himself, to avoid the sarcastic sneers of Withers.

Selina's mind was agitated by a thousand different sensations. She was convinced, by Edward's conversation, that he was attached to some woman of humble fortunes. She sighed, she knew not why. She thought it was in pity for her friend; but however she might wish to hide her feelings from herself, she feared that she loved Edward Fitzmaurice too much for her peace. His firm attachment to his unknown mistress, — an attachment no selfish

selfish consideration could dissolve—presented itself to her mind in its brightest colours.

“Ah!” thought she, “would that I were the object of such an attachment! With a partner like Edward, no difficulty would be painful, no toil severe. But I forget my deficiency in personal attractions. Never till now did I feel their value.”

Another trial awaited Selina. She had to communicate the circumstances of her interview with Edward to Miss Delvalley. She vainly endeavoured to collect her scattered thoughts. The chariot stopped, and she ascended to the drawing-room.—It was empty.—Selina took up a book; and in about half an hour, Augusta, beaming with beauty, which received every advantage from her elegant court dress, entered the room.

“Do you go to St. James’s to-day, Miss Delvalley?—I understood that it was not your intention.”

"It was not," said Augusta, while she arranged her glittering drapery; "but my brother will always drive me thither. He is already gone himself. I often beg him not to press me; and tell him, that he may be a bishop, while I can never be one.—But bless me, my dear, how unwell you look!"

"It is very cold," replied Selina, faintly.

"No, no, my dear girl, you are really unwell; you can scarcely support yourself. What has happened?"

"I—I—I have seen Mr. Fitzmaurice;—and I fear—"

"Oh heavens! what of Edward? Is he ill? Is he distressed? Tell me quickly."

"I will tell you another time.—The coach is at the door: go to the drawing-room now."

"I will not go at all.—Speak, I entreat you: is my Fitzmaurice ill?"

"He is well," said Selina, a little recovered:

covered: "he will see you before he leaves town."

"Before he leaves town!" echoed Augusta, half smiling. "No, no, he will not leave town alone."

"Dearest Miss Delvalley," cried Selina, "prepare for news that will shock you. I am grieved to be the herald of misfortune, but——"

"Speak, speak!"

"Mr. Fitzmaurice's heart is devoted to another."

"I'll not believe it," cried Augusta, trembling with indignation.

"Nor would I believe it," said Selina, "had I not heard the confirmation of what has been the public talk, from his own mouth."

"You must have been deceived, Miss Ormerode: it is impossible."

"Would it were!" said Selina, with a deep sigh. "You are worthy each other. Your fortune would repair the injustice of his uncle, and your virtues make a
6 5 worthy

worthy heart happy. Mr. Fitzmaurice is abandoned by his uncle for having fixed his affections on a woman whose only crime is poverty. He expressed his love in unequivocal terms, and is resolved to retire with her from the hurry of the capital."

Augusta scarcely breathed: a fullen torpor bound up her faculties. At length she flung herself upon the sofa, and burst into tears. Miss Ormerode, glad to see nature thus relieved, attempted not to check their course, but mingled her sorrows with those of her friend. In a short time the soul of Augusta grew inflamed by rage. She frantically rent her dress, and scattered the floor with plumes and diamonds. Selina, by her soothing attentions, drew her to her own apartment; and the remainder of the day was passed, on the part of Augusta, in floods of tears or useless starts of passion.

CHAP. VII.

A Declaration—A Quarrel—A Reconciliation.

THREE days passed away without any news from Edward. Augusta had recovered something like tranquillity; at least her face wore the appearance of resignation. On the fourth morning, as she sat at her toilet, languid and spiritless, she was informed that Mr. Fitzmaurice was in the parlour. At his name joy brightened her countenance, and her heart beat with unusual quickness. She hastily finished dressing, and in a short time entered the room, where stood the man of her heart, rendered more interesting by the dejection visible on his manly features.

Both were evidently embarrassed. At length Edward made a confused apology for not having profited before by the permission of visiting her. Augusta now rallied her sinking spirits, and reproached him for doubting the continuance of her regard.—“I fear,” said she, “that there is some misunderstanding between you and my brother. If it may be accommodated, how willingly would I mediate between you!”

Edward's face glowed at the mention of Delvalley.—“I come, Madam,” said he, “to take my leave of you for ever. Highly flattered as I feel myself by your friendship, I have been too hardly used by society to continue to form a part of it. I leave town this evening.”

“You cannot mean it,” said Augusta. “Are you to deem all men selfish, because you have suffered by the folly or wickedness of a few?—Reflect awhile: there are many who would be but too happy could they render you so.”

“Your

"Your opinion does me honour, Madam; but you over-rate my merits. My existence is a matter of indifference to all, —even to myself."

"Not so," exclaimed Augusta, with animation: "not so. Your welfare and happiness are my earnest wishes.—Edward, it is time to throw aside reserve. You are not so misanthropic but *love* can soothe your cares; and the happy woman you have chosen will doubtless——" She hesitated.

"That I have *chosen*!" cried Edward.

"Pardon me, Miss Delvalley, if I assure you, that I have never yet seen the woman who has known how to inspire me with love."

"No!" said Augusta, with quickness. "Am I then to imagine that all the town are deceived, and that you did not inform Miss Ormerode that you were on the point of marriage with a lady, whose only fault was her low circumstances?"

"Never."

"Nor

"Nor that your uncle had on that account disinherited——"

"Heavens, Miss Delvalley! can you possibly be serious?"

"Is it not so?" exclaimed Augusta.

"I should be sorry to think that Miss Ormerode was the propagator of an untruth. On my honour I am not, I never was, on the point of marriage."

Augusta clasped her hands in transport: a flattering tide of joy rushed to her heart, and her eyes sparkled with the strength of her emotions.

"Oh then, we may yet be happy!— Yes, Edward, I spurn the silly rules which tend to separate congenial souls. I blush not to own my love—my love for you. Why should I blush at what reflects honour on my judgment? I from this moment resign all I possess to your disposal, too happy if you will deign to accept the feeble testimony of my affection."

Edward

Edward had prepared himself for a scene of tenderness; but of so direct a proposal he had no idea.

"Miss Delvalley," said he, in a solemn tone, "words are inadequate to express my gratitude for the favourable ideas you entertain of me. Think, however, that I have never felt any other sentiment for you than esteem and admiration. You deserve a heart wholly your own. I will not wrong you by accepting your hand, when love is a stranger to my feelings. If I have escaped the power of your attractions, I will venture to assert that no woman will have the power of inspiring me with affection. Bless, then, some worthier, some happier man, with that heart where every virtue is throned, and leave me to be forgotten. The gay scenes of life will soon erase the transient impression I, however unworthy, may have made, and Augusta Delvalley be exalted to that rank she was born to grace."

Augusta, during this speech, sat as petrified.

petrified. Her bosom heaved convulsively. Edward took her cold hand in his, and proceeded:

"Your brother has used me cruelly: he has cut me to the soul: yet I once, on the continent, saved his life from banditti, and I will not take back the gift. Tell him, my dearest friend (for such must I call you), that I repeat my forgiveness for the ruin he has heaped upon me;—and now farewell.—May every good——"

"From banditti!" murmured Augusta.

"From banditti! Tell me all.—Where?"

Edward now execrated his heedless conduct. He recollected, too late, that Delvalley mentioned his sister as being in the carriage when he attempted their rescue. Willing to avoid her transports, he attempted to leave the room.

Augusta wildly arose. She seized him by the hand, and exclaimed, "You, then, were the generous man who came to our aid—who saved the lives of myself and brother?—It is so:—your eyes confess it.

During

During my long residence with my aunt in Italy, my brother frequently made an excursion to visit us. We were indeed attacked near Rome. A stranger flew to our assistance. My brother was wounded; and I soon became insensible to all that passed. We made many inquiries after the stranger. I have found him.—Oh, my beloved Edward, you once saved my life,—do not, by a cruel flight, deprive me of it; do not let me repent that my existence is your gift, or force me to fall a self-immolated victim to your unbending spirit.”

“I cannot,” said he, “offer you the sacrifice of an indifferent heart. You urge your obligations to me:—take pity, then, on one whose soul is torn at the sight of distress he is incompetent to allay; and permit him to lament in solitude the pain he has unwillingly inflicted.”

“Never,” cried Augusta, “never.—What! shall I suffer the man who saved

saved my life—the man I love more than that life—to waste his days in a state far different from what he was taught by the sycophant world to expect? Edward, I am rich—I *was* rich; for all that was mine is yours. Oh, that you would return the poor sacrifice I make, by a tenderer sentiment than cold esteem!”

“I forbear, Madam,” said Edward, with a disdain not even his situation could repress, to say that I think your offer unkind.—Adieu.—I leave this town for ever.—I go to——”

“To your future wife,” raved Augusta, while her varying emotions threw an air of insanity over her features.—“It must not, it shall not be. I love—but remember, Fitzmaurice, I can hate. It is too plain I am slighted for an unworthy object. You have deceived me. Miss Ormerode said truly that your heart was not insensible. Let not, however, my rival boast her triumph. She shall dearly rue

me a competition with Augusta Delvalley!"

"Madam," said Edward, "hear me, for the last time. I once more solemnly protest, I never yet had that affection for any individual, which I look upon as absolutely necessary to form the basis of connubial love. What Miss Ormerode has asserted I know not, but hope and believe that it will be explained to the satisfaction of both; and, grateful for every thought you have deigned to bestow on me, I for ever take my leave."

"Hold!" cried Augusta; "promise to defer your departure for a month, or by all that is most sacred, I swear not to survive it an hour."

Edward, shocked at her vehemence, with reluctance gave the demanded promise, and at length was permitted to depart. Augusta listened to his retiring steps, as they echoed through the hall; and when the street door shut after him, felt as if sinking into annihilation. Her
2 spirits

spirits failed her, and she leaned on the back of a chair for support. At this unfortunate moment she was surprised by Selina, who, when she heard that Edward had left the house, came to offer all the consolation the circumstances would permit.

"He is then gone?" cried she. "Forget him then, my dear friend. The man who can neglect a heart like yours is unworthy an attachment so pure."

In the present state of Augusta's mind, this well-meant address produced the effect of oil on flame. She fixed her expressive eye on Selina, and in a broken voice articulated, "Miss Ormerode, no more duplicity: my Edward is not an unworthy object; and your assertions, that he is on the point of marriage, are as false as their motive is unfathomable."

Selina now feared that the emotions her friend had experienced were too powerful to be supported, and that her brain had received a rude shock. She requested
her

her to be calm, and take some repose.—
Augusta started.—“Too long have I
suffered an artful woman to abuse my
credulity. Edward has solemnly declared
that he has not the slightest idea of an
union with any woman.”

“He has then probably changed his
mind,” replied Selina, coolly; “and as
I never yet have advanced a syllable con-
trary to the strictest veracity, I must be
excused if I aver that he is the deceiver.
But, Miss Delvalley, since you have con-
descended to hurt the feelings of one
whose dependant situation claims the most
delicate respect, I thank you for your
kind patronage hitherto, but must not add
to the obligation.”

She left the room; and retiring to
her own apartment, prepared for a re-
moval from Sackville Street. Her aunt,
Mrs. Beddome, lived in the vicinity of
Red Lion Square. To her she dispatched
a note, announcing her intention of taking
refuge in her house. All being prepared

for a removal, she sent her maid to Augusta, begging to see her for a few minutes. The girl returned in tears with a message purporting that Miss Delvalley was too much indisposed to see any body, and, that she might not detain her, had ordered the chariot to be at her commands. Thus freed from dependance on the great, which is at best an irksome situation, Selina was conveyed to the house of her aunt, who gave her that welcome which is the best soother of a wounded spirit.

The more Selina reflected on the invectives of Augusta, the more was she bewildered in conjecture. The words Edward had spoken of his sister she had innocently construed as a declaration of his love to a mistress. That he should deny the imputation, and affix the stigma of falsehood upon her, cut her to the soul: such behaviour ill accorded with his known generosity; and she was inclined to believe that the rage of Augusta

on

on his refusal of her offered hand had so far warped her understanding, as to make her imagine that Edward had denied his attachment: at all events she resolved to clear up this mystery, and wrote an expostulatory letter to Augusta, enclosing an open one to Edward. This, however, did not reach the person for whom it was designed: Miss Delvalley no sooner beheld the hand writing of Selina, than she committed the letter unopened to the flames.

Edward, on his return to Park Street, was accosted by Withers: "I cannot go out of town for more than a month," said he, morosely; "lawyers, with their infernal jargon, will detain me till then, and perhaps longer."

"I am not sorry for it," replied Edward; "for I have given a solemn promise to stay in London exactly the time you mention."

"To whom have you given this promise?"

"To

"To a woman," said Edward, smiling at the rebuke he knew he should undergo.

"To a woman!" exclaimed the cynic. "A woman never values her promises;—why should you value yours?"

"I admire the strength of your argument, but must beg leave to decline acting with impropriety."

"Oh, what a fine young misanthrope will be spoiled by a woman's tears!—The sex are always at some confounded mischief or other."

They then separated: Withers walked out, and Edward took up a volume of Shakespear; but his mind was too much agitated to attend to the magic of Prospero, or the sweet simplicity of Miranda. At length his eye rested on the part where the ferocious Caliban exclaims,

"You taught me language, and the profit on't
Is, I know how to curse."

"How many," thought he, "only employ the time allotted them for nobler purposes,

purposes, in railing at their fellow-creatures, without seeking to encourage by precept, or amend by example. It should seem that these cynical reprovers of human nature, like the monster drawn by Shakespeare, only employ their talents for the basest ends. It is true I suffer by the folly and ingratitude of a few; yet did not Augusta say truly, that I must not therefore draw conclusions to the condemnation of *all*? Withers is a misanthrope: does his impatient spirit communicate happiness to himself, or pleasure to others?"

In this state of mind did Edward sit musing, till his ideas arranged themselves in poetical order.

SONNET.

The skies may smile, and Nature deck the ground
 With all her vernal store; her richest hues
 O'er hill and mead their pictur'd pride diffuse,
 And v'lets waft their grateful incense round:

VOL. I.

H

Yet

Yet strife deforms the pleasures of the grove,
 (So oft the sage's and the poet's theme :)
 The hound the stag, the hawk pursues the dove;
 The sunny rill pollute with blood the stream.
 These uncontrol'd by Reason's milder sway,
 The means of happiness may never scan;
 But, bright illumin'd by her pow'ful ray,
 What plea, alas! shall be adduc'd by *Man*?
 That thus his fellow-men become his prey,
 And hate and rancour fill his short protracted span!

Edward continued musing, till a letter was delivered to him by the servant of the house: the seal was black. He carelessly opened it, but his indifference was converted into astonishment.

"MY DEAR NEPHEW,

"Solomon says, 'a rod for the fool's back:' now, as I could not, without becoming sinful, differ from the wisest of men, I am willing to think that you have acted quite right, and that your conduct towards your poor dear uncle was not blameable.

"It has pleased Heaven, doubtless for
 wise

wife purposes, and therefore I do not murmur, to take to itself my beloved third husband, Nicholas Rigby. He went off like a suckling that goes to sleep; for having eaten a hearty supper, he expired in his arm chair. I have lost in him a faithful helpmate and a tender guardian. The world has lost an honest man, and a merchant of incorruptible integrity; as the dear man himself used often to say would be the case when he died.

“It is some comfort to me in this my sorrow to reflect that the affairs of the dear departed were all properly settled; for (worthy creature!) he has left me every thing he could call his own. He knew (good man!) that he brought nothing into the world, and certainly could carry nothing out. I thought his death would have caused mine; indeed I shall never recover it. To experience the loss of a beloved husband three times, is enough to break the most obdurate heart;

and were I to suffer thus a fourth time, no misery would equal mine: but grace is all-sufficient, and I hope will, in the end, enable me to bear with fortitude the unavoidable evils of this transitory world.

“ My departed Rigby has left me (as I told you before) all that he could call his own; but I hope, nephew, you know me too well to imagine that this accession of wealth gives me any alleviation from sorrow. I shall never forget the giver; who, to my everlasting comfort, is now in Abraham’s bosom. Gold is but dross, and all under the sun is vanity and vexation of spirit.

“ I should be worse than the beast with seven heads and ten horns, and the woman who rides upon it, if I rejoiced even for a moment at the possession of worldly mammon. Would that my dear Mr. Rigby had made you his heir! But as it is, the will of the dead must be obeyed: he certainly knew best how to give away his own—dear man!

“ Tormented

" Tormented as I am with this accession of fortune, the only hope of joy I have is in the exercise of charity, as well as of every other virtue. I mean to retire into the country, where I shall distribute the widow's mite, and I am only detained in town by the obstinacy of a woman who is indebted to me in the sum of two hundred pounds. She has written me a long letter, in which I am told she is in distressed circumstances—how that can be I cannot tell; money is easily made—as my poor dear Mr. Rigby used to say, 'Put me in London streets with health and ten fingers, and I'll make my way to wealth.' Besides, her poverty may be her own fault, and I would not encourage any species of impropriety. You understand these things, nephew: will you settle this business for me, and call at my house immediately on the receipt of this letter? but don't talk to me of your dear departed uncle, unless you have a mind to break my heart.

" I love you, nephew (that is to say,

in an honest meaning) too much to bear the want of your company. Your apartments are preparing, and after we have settled my affairs, I mean to retire to my native spot, near Truro in Cornwall, where I shall busy myself alone in spiritual concerns, till I die and sleep with my fathers, and leave you to inherit the land.

"I am

"Your affectionate aunt in the Spirit,
Piccadilly.

"DEBORAH RIGBY."

Edward's surprise at the receipt of this homily was not to be described; he rubbed his eyes, doubting if he were awake. At length he resolved to wave the offer, as he had already once suffered by the caprices of his protectors. With this resolution he repaired to Withers, and informing him of the circumstance, asked if he did not approve of the determination he had made, not to accept of the proposal of Mrs. Rigby?

"No,

"No, I do not approve of it," said Withers, pursing up his mouth, and contracting his brows; "I am glad to see that you despise riches; but may they not fall, on your refusal, to some villanous rascal who would add to the stock of folly and vice, by every effort of a depraved imagination?"

"Since," replied Edward, "your misanthropy is such as to make you despise the actions of any, surely the introduction of folly or vice must be a matter of indifference."

"I hate the world, it is true," cried Withers; "but I would not injure what I cannot amend. Shall Pompey's pillar be overthrown because no longer in a perfect state?—But I am wrong; the weakness of humanity sometimes will—I—I—Follow the dictates of your own heart."

A tear coursed down the rugged cheek of Withers; and, ashamed of his better feelings, he left the room. This strange

behaviour of a man who till now appeared only guided by the rules of decided misanthropy, gave Edward ample room for reflection. Indeed curiosity was not wanting, but it was always checked by the commanding air of Withers, whose keen eye spoke his disapprobation of inquiry.

The more Edward reflected on the conduct of his Mentor, the more he was perplexed. Withers had acknowledged himself to be possessed of an ample fortune; his appearance was plain; his expenses were trivial. He mentioned not from what sources he derived his wealth, and seemed resolved that they should remain an impenetrable secret.

Edward was preparing to visit his sister, when a folded paper on the floor caught his eye. He opened it: it was poetry, and in Withers's hand-writing.

Written

Written on a Mountain in Devonshire.

Let me steal awhile from care,
And taste the healthful morning air,
From the mountain's ferny brow
Let me cast the eye below,
Where ocean, rocks, and woods are seen,
In grand variety combin'd;
Where dusky dells and meadows green
Boldly diversify the scene,
And charm the care-worn mind.

II.

Crown'd, yon gray mass of rock behold,
With oaks by autumn ting'd with gold,
Whose roots tenacious wind around
The hoary ruin. Hark! the sound
Of rising winds that sullen blow!
Now distant waters strike the ear;
In awful murmurs hoarse and slow,
The fields of ocean heave below,
And mix delight with fear.

III.

In scenes like these the sacred choir
Of Mona's priesthood struck the lyre
With bold enthusiastic glow,
And pluck'd the hallow'd mistletoe.

Shrouded in woods like these the band
 Of Freedom's sons the sea withstood,
 While Superstition's wither'd hand
 Rear'd high the dreaded magic wand,
 Nor droop'd till drown'd in blood.

IV.
 The eye to other scenes is drawn,
 To the cool vale and level lawn;
 To th' hillock, from whose moss-grown side
 In clouds of foam descends the tide;
 O'er broken rocks it glides away,
 Now ripples o'er the fallen tree,
 In various channels now will stray,
 In forms fantastic murm'ring play,
 And seek the wider sea.

V.
 Why at the prospect heaves the sigh?
 What means the tear that dims my eye?
 Ah, why do scenes which should bestow
 Calm thoughts, but prove a source of woe?
 In scenes less grand—to me more dear—
 In ———'s still and pleasing grove,
 Amanda's voice has sooth'd my ear—
 (Accept, dear fainter shade! a tear)—
 With purest, fondest love.

When I behold rich Devon's plain,
 A transient pleasure I obtain;
 The mental banquet soon is o'er,
 When memory paints the scene that is lost—
 Ah! lost to me the spot I lov'd:
 But she—the soul of all—is fled,
 (Whose presence, deserts had improv'd,
 Whose beauty, fainted to love had mov'd,)
 And number'd with the dead.

VII.

Cease, cease to hope, oh child of woe!
 That pleasure's cup for thee shall flow.
 For thee the seasons cheerless roll,
 And nature chills, not warms thy soul.
 A retrospect of pleasures gone,
 Damps ev'ry hope of future joys.—
 Cease, cease thy heart-oppressive moan,
 And rest with her, beneath one stone,
 Who most thy thoughts employs*.

* These verses were written a few years ago, and are now presented, with very little alteration, to the public. As they originally stood, they were addressed to the memory of a lady, who, independent of the claims of consanguinity, has every title to the deep-rooted though unavailing regret of the author.

Could this paper be written by Withers? No date was affixed to it; the ink was faded, and it appeared as if many years had elapsed since it had been first written. A disappointment in early affection seemed to account for the asperity of the cynic: yet could he who lamented the loss of a beloved object rail with indiscriminate rancour against the sex?—Impossible. He who has once been in the habits of listening to the refined ideas of a pure female mind, will, by catching a portion of its delicacy, learn to appreciate its value.

Wearied with conjecture, Edward left the house, with the intention of calling upon his sister, who had provided apartments at Lambeth. He found her employed in reading; her face, divested of the rouge with which, in her days of infamy, it had been disfigured, was pale and emaciated; her eyes were half closed, and it appeared as if a tear had lately escaped them.

After

After affectionately embracing his sister, Edward inquired the cause of her dejection, and asked if the book she had been reading had contributed towards it.

Helen put the book into his hands; it was Dr. Gregory's *Legacy to his Daughters*.

"Such," said she, with a sigh, "are the duties of the female world; ah! how have I neglected them!"

"I am happy, my dear Helen," said Edward, "to find that your repentance is as sincere as your errors and sufferings were great; let not, however, repentance degenerate into despair; I hope yet to see you restored to society."

"I have no wish," said Helen, "again to mix with the world; indeed I am unfitted for it; vice has rendered me an object of contempt; and if I despise myself, what have I to expect from others?"

"You are wrong, Helen; search your heart, and you will find a secret acquittal."

"No,

"No, Edward, no; shall I trust to the voice of that, to whose weakness I owe all my sorrows? My conduct can admit of little palliation. Pardon my presumption; but I have a favour to beg: start not when I request you, on my knees, to procure me admission into the Magdalen. I will change my name, and no disgrace shall be reflected on you."

"Disgrace!" cried Edward, while he raised her from the ground, and folded her to his bosom; "disgrace! my dear, my penitent sister, how shall I express my satisfaction? Pursue your purpose; I will busy myself in procuring your admission; but do you feel yourself capable of seduction? Helen, reflect on what you do."

"I can bear seduction; nay, I ardently wish it; for shall I tell you? will you not despise me if——"

"Proceed," cried Edward.

"I was accustomed," said she, bursting into tears, "when guilty of every irregularity, to swallow large quantities of
spirituous

spirituous liquors ; long habit renders me incapable of wholly abstaining from the practice : besides, I was brought, by example, to use oaths the most horrible and blasphemous. I have endeavoured to check these since you snatched me from destruction ; but in despite of all my precautions I sometimes find myself faulty. In retirement a severe guardian will watch over my conduct, and perhaps I may overcome with difficulty what with difficulty I acquired."

Edward shuddered as his sister thus candidly confessed her crimes ; he soothed her broken spirit, and, though his pride revolted from the idea, resolved to procure her the asylum she so much coveted.

CHAP. VIII.

The Widow's Tale.

EDWARD, having left the penitent Helen, repaired to Piccadilly; the footman immediately recollected him, and with a smile and low bow testified his joy at his return. The house was silent, for Mrs. Rigby kept up the decorum of indisposition, though her husband had been buried four whole days; but Edward was a relation, and his appearance could give no shock to the rules which widows have from time immemorial prescribed for themselves.

Mrs. Rigby soon entered the room into which Edward was shown, leaning upon her maid. After a decent shower of tears, and a moderate quantity of deep sighs duly paid to the memory of the dear departed,

parted, she began to converse in a very composed and pious strain on his circumstances.

“Two hundred and fifty thousand pounds, my dear Edward,” said she, while she took a glass of Daffy’s elixir from her attendant, “is, to be sure, a vast burden upon a poor lone woman. I think I shall never marry again; I shall never forget my poor dear Mr. Rigby. Well! he’s in heaven, if ever man went there; so I submit to what is ordained. As for marrying again, as I was saying before, it is quite out of the question; I am resolved never to enter into that happy state more; I can’t bear to think of it. But what can I do? I cannot manage my affairs alone. You, my dear, who will inherit after me (since I am to my sorrow a widow), are best qualified to do me right, because you will have an interest in my affairs; and as my dear Mr. Rigby used often to say, poor man! the horse you feed will carry you safe over the bridge.

bridge. I beg, Edward, that you will go to Mrs. Lomely; try if you cannot get this two hundred pounds by fair means; but if she is obstinate, let her take the consequence: two hundred pounds is an amazing sum, and more than I can afford to lose: if she is in low circumstances, it is doubtless her own fault; and Heaven forbid that I should encourage any species of impropriety. But you understand these things, nephew; you are a merchant, and know that money must be had: charity is a fine thing, a very fine thing; but let us be just first, and charitable afterwards."

"I shall obey you, Madam," said Edward, stifling the contempt which some part of this speech excited: "but I must differ from you, if you imagine that the love of gain supercedes every other feeling in the breast of a merchant. That there are many whose generous ideas have been contracted by a too close attention to one darling pursuit, is true; but I hope (nay, I know)

I know) that the majority of our British merchants will not come under that description."

He then departed, and proceeded to High Holborn, in order to examine the validity of the claims of his aunt upon Mrs. Lomely. A girl opened the door, and directed him to a back room up two pair of stairs. Here Edward beheld a sight that charmed his feeling heart. Mrs. Lomely was in deep mourning; her face, which had suffered more from grief than time, exhibited traces of uncommon beauty: she was working at her needle, and a beautiful girl, about seven years old, was reading to her a chapter in the Bible. At some distance from these sat another little girl, who rocked a cradle with her feet, while her hands were employed in making purses of different coloured ribands. A pot was boiling, and a small piece of meat hung by a string before the fire. This apartment, though the bed-room as well as the kitchen, was kept perfectly neat. Edward

ward recollected the parlour of Anastasia, and mentally drew a comparison between that and the room in which he was.

Mrs. Lomely arose ; she seemed confused at the entrance of a stranger, and by standing before the fire seemed willing to screen her culinary articles from observation. Edward apologized for his intrusion, and informed her that he came at the desire of Mrs. Rigby.

At this name the cheek of Mrs. Lomely, naturally pale, faded yet more ; but in a short time a glowing red flushed her face, and pointing to her children, with a significant look she exclaimed :

“ Mrs. Rigby is then resolved on my ruin !”

“ By no means, Madam,” cried Edward eagerly ; “ she is incapable of cruelty. You are not acquainted with her.”

“ I am not, Sir ; but I have often solicited an interview, and she has returned for answer, that she would put her affairs into
into

into the hands of one who would see justice done to both parties. Alas! Sir, it is not *justice* I need, but *compassion*."

"Mrs. Rigby, Madam, will, I am confident, not distress you. Be comforted—I am the person who have the management of her concerns, and dare assure you, that no harsh or improper steps will be taken."

"I thank you, Sir—for my dear helpless girls do I thank you. I can bear misfortune—I have long been a prey to it; but when I reflect on the lot which awaits these innocents, my boasted heroism vanishes, and I feel all the anguish of which a maternal heart is capable."

At this instant the cry of a child issued from the cradle. Mrs. Lomely approached it, and lifting up the curtain, disclosed the blooming face of a cherub. At the sight of its mother a smile dimpled its countenance, while the checked tears still glittered on its rosy cheek. Edward knelt
by

by the cradle, and affectionately kissed the child, who held out its little hands, and received the caresses with pleasure. Mrs. Lomely took the infant in her arms, and sitting down, requested Edward to do the same.

"You seem, Sir," said she, "to possess a feeling soul; your attention to my dear little Sophy tells me so; for I have found those who love the innocent caresses of a child to possess a general benevolence.— Poor Sophy! how like her father! May her heart, but not her lot, resemble his!"

"I hope, Madam," said Edward, "that this meeting may prove fortunate for both of us; your circumstances may take a favourable turn, and I have the satisfaction of contributing to your happiness. Permit me to inquire the nature of your obligations to Mrs. Rigby."

"It will be necessary," said Mrs. Lomely, with a deep sigh, "to recapitulate some painful circumstances which gave rise to
my

my present distress *.—I am the daughter of a druggist of Liverpool, who spared no pains to cultivate my mind; for I was his only child. My father always supported a genteel appearance; but he was thoughtless, and proud of mixing with the best society, to which his good character and cheerful behaviour procured him a willing passport. Death, however, terminated his career at an early age; and on examining his affairs, the sum of four hundred pounds was all that could be saved from the creditors. I was at this time seventeen years of age; an uncle, who had a large family, took me under his protection, and I owe him every obligation. At the house of this kind relation I first met Mr. Lomely; he was about five years older than myself, and was comfortably settled in a farm: his mind had been cultivated by a better education than generally falls to the lot of the lower classes of life. This advantage

* This little tale is founded upon fact, and drawn from some papers in the author's possession.

served

served only to give lustre to the feelings of an honest heart. Mr. Lomely had two sisters; they were dependant upon him, and while he busied himself in the duties of the field, they superintended the economy of the house. His affection for these sisters was unbounded, and it was often remarked by my uncle, that so good a brother could not fail to make an excellent husband. Lomely's visits at our house grew frequent, yet he never neglected his business, but of an evening would draw round our fire-side, and cheer our little circle by his gaiety, or improve it by his good sense. My uncle loved him more and more, and called him a prudent youth—the highest title of honour in his estimation.

“ It was observed by my cousins, who were very good girls, that Lomely paid me particular attentions. I pretended to laugh at the idea, but in my heart was pleased. At length his behaviour grew so marked, that it was impossible to misunderstand

derstand it; and though we talked of *friendship*, we too well knew it was *love*.

“ At this time an unexpected storm burst upon me; the trustee in whose hands my little property was vested absconded, and I was reduced to be dependant on my uncle, who was already burdened with a family of five daughters. I was flattered by that worthy relation that I might yet save a few pounds; but his hopes deceived him; for it was but too certain that the whole of my little property was irretrievably lost.

“ No sooner did the news of my misfortune spread about the neighbourhood, than Mr. Lomely openly declared his love. He, however, candidly informed me, that his income was for the present inadequate to support a wife in the way he could wish — his sisters must be provided for; they had the offer of an establishment at the house of an elderly relation; but a twelve-month would elapse before he could settle every thing to his satisfaction and my
VOL. I. I comfort.

comfort. By naming a twelvemonth he affixed the shortest period he possibly could, apprehensive that I might imagine his attachment to arise from interested motives; he feared to hurt my delicacy—oh that he had consulted the dictates of prudence!—The year expired, my uncle gave me away, and I pledged my faith to the best of mankind. Our life, if not splendid, was happy; my husband laboured in the field, and in the evening was welcomed home by my smiles and a comfortable hearth. My eldest girls, Mary and Jane, were born two years subsequent to our marriage, and my little Sophy six years afterwards.”

Mrs. Lomely's voice here began to falter—she rocked her baby on her knee, and proceeded:

“ My husband did not fear work; he toiled more than his strength could bear; and a few months before my Sophy was born, a lingering illness seized him: his sweetness of temper was, however, undiminished.

minished. The evening before he died he endeavoured to comfort me, and death seemed to have no terrors for him, but in the apprehension of what I should suffer. Never shall I forget the next morning; by the assistance of two neighbours my husband was conveyed from his bed-room to our little parlour. I had placed pillows about the wicker chair in which he sat; though faint, he spoke with cheerfulness; I gave him his basin of milk, he touched it with his lips, but shook his head, and with a mournful smile bade me replace it on the table. In a few minutes he complained of being drowsy, and leaned his head upon my arm: he remained in this situation for about a quarter of an hour—my eldest girl ran across the room—I gave her a signal to keep silence, and turned my head gently to see if the rest of the invalid was broken—his rest was eternal—for, oh! what were my feelings when I discovered that the lifeless
I 2 body

body of my husband rested upon my arms.)

"After suffering the most acute sorrow I thought could fall to the lot of mortality, I little thought of experiencing a greater share of misery. Among my husband's papers I found this letter—it was unfinished, and I believe written to a brother in the West Indies."

Mrs. Lomely took a folded paper from a drawer, and presented it to Edward.

The Letter.

"You are wrong, my dear James—prudence has formed no part of my character. You affirm in your last letter, that I shall be happy, because I have acted upon well-judged principles. I am, it is true, generally esteemed a prudent man; but prudence, I repeat it, has formed no part of my character.

"I have, I own, always endeavoured to act right; my passions are not violent
—would

—would I could say so of my feelings!— That equanimity of temper you lay so much stress upon, has, perhaps, been my ruin. Accustomed, by an early philosophy, to look with indifference on the occurrences of life, I valued the gifts of fortune but little, and smiled at the avidity of my fellow-men.

“ An education superior to my rank in life procured me the acquaintance of some agreeable families; and by this means I first saw the amiable woman who is now at the same time the torment and solace of my existence. Her fortune was small, and the villany of her trustee robbed her even of that. I had addressed her previous to her losses; and though we had entered into no engagement, my affection was known to her. If even I had not loved her, could I, as a man of honour, retract?—Would I had! The trial might have been severe, but it would have been transient; while the miseries I have en-

tailed upon her are, I fear, of a permanent nature. I married—Where was my prudence at that moment? I soon was surrounded by a little family; but the caresses of innocence plunged daggers to my heart. Often when my wife has placed my children on my knee, and a forced smile has brightened my face, have I cursed the hour which gave birth to these pledges of affection. Painful is it to clothe sorrow in the garb of ease—yet daily was this my task. My affairs were deranged; the expenses of a family exhausted my resources, and I felt all the agonies of despair when I reflected on the shock to which I must expose my wife. This existence have I dragged on for years: my wife is industrious and affectionate, my children healthy and beautiful; but their sight is death to me, and their gaiety a source of bitter reflection. Did I love my family less, I would fly to the most remote part of the world, withheld alone
by

by an awful fear from self-destruction.— Perhaps, my dear James, this may be the last time I shall——”

“ This heart-breaking letter, Sir,” continued Mrs. Lomely (seeing that Edward had read it), “ opened my eyes to the misery of which I was the cause. I was for some time in a state nearly frantic. I found my affairs even worse than my fears had painted them; but I resolved to imitate my husband, and make every effort to save my children. The late Mr. Rigby was at Liverpool (whither I had removed, with the intention of opening a small shop), the interests of Lord Allerton having obliged him to take the journey, as a general election was at hand.— An old gentleman of small property, but great influence, interested himself in my affairs: he had known and esteemed my husband; and when Mr. Rigby, of whom he had some knowledge, called at his house, I happened to be in the parlour.

Not willing to interrupt any business, I took my leave, and was much surprised at receiving a note in these words:

“ ‘ MRS. LOMELY,

“ I understand you labour under some little embarrassments—if two hundred pounds will be of service, you may command them.

“ ‘ I am yours, &c.

“ ‘ NICHOLAS RIGBY.”

Mrs. Lomely.—My husband and I

“ I almost doubted the evidence of my

senses, and was yet in a state of uncertainty, when Mr. Rigby entered my humble dwelling. He tendered the two hundred pounds, or more if I stood in need of it. I at first hesitated—the offer was

tempting, but a principle of justice restrained me; and I frankly acknowledged that I could only depend upon my industry for the repayment. Mr. Rigby

kindly begged me not to be uneasy on

that

that head, and taking an acknowledgment for the money, left me.

"I flew to the gentleman at whose house I had first seen my benefactor. I told him all; tears bedewed the cheeks of the good man, and vowing that he would repay such excellence as far as lay in his power, he exerted all his influence, departed with Mr. Rigby for the contested borough, and Lord Allerton gained his election.

"I joyfully opened a linen-draper's shop, and placed the remainder of my property in a country bank; but I soon had reason to repent this step—the bank failed, and hundreds besides myself were sufferers. A long illness succeeded this fatal blow, and my affairs were again deranged—my old friend was dead—I gave up all to my creditors, and, by the advice of my uncle, came to London. Here I am enabled to protract my existence by plain work, while my little Mary makes and sells the purses she is now employed on."

Edward listened attentively while Mrs. Lomely told her simple tale; he begged her to cheer her spirits, for he would settle every thing to her satisfaction; and taking up one of the riband purses, he slipped a ten pound note into it, and took his leave.

CHAP.

CHAP. IX.

Love and Hate.

ON his return to his lodgings, which he meant to discharge, Edward was met by Withers.

"Here have been," said he, "four letters left for you."

"And where are they?"

"Gone.—The lady, who, I suppose, is your disinterested innamorata, called in her chariot, with two lazy rascals behind it, and took them away again."

At this moment a chariot drove to the door.

"Here she is again," cried Withers. "I pity the poor horses with all my soul."

He then departed. In a few moments the door was thrown open, and Augusta,

with her fine features distorted by rage, entered the room.

Edward trembled as he met her haggard eye. Her softness was fled; her parched lips marked her internal agony. Both were silent for some time, till Augusta articulated, "You seem hurt, Sir, at this visit—perhaps I ought to call it intrusion; but you must not wonder that I depart from the delicacy of my sex, since you have forfeited the feelings and candour of yours."

"Madam!"

"Have you not deceived, grossly deceived me? Are you not the most artful of mankind? My love, my ardent love, which I have not shamed to acknowledge, is slighted. Has nature formed me a horror to the sight, or has vice blotted my soul?—Oh, Edward! I came here to upbraid; but my resolution melts when I behold you."

"Edward looked upon her with pity. He placed her upon a sofa, and walked

con-

confusedly to and fro.—“I am sensible, Miss Delvalley—I say that I—I am fully sensible of the honour—of my happiness, and unworthiness to hold a place in—in your heart;—but let me——” Edward could say no more: the words died upon his lips.

Angusta raised her speaking eyes, and gentleness superseded the transports of rage. Renovated hope sprung from the abyss of despair, and the heart of Edward seemed yet attainable.

This gleam was momentary. A sudden idea flashed across her memory, and the gay vision fled. Again a gloomy frown took possession of her fine features, and she exclaimed, “Fitzmaurice, will you, as a man of honour, deny an engagement with any woman whatsoever?”

“I do most solemnly deny it.”

“As you hope for peace and reputation?”

“May I ever forfeit both, if I have yet

yet seen the woman for whom I feel an exclusive partiality!"

"Deceiver! I know you.—May the rewards of perjury be yours!—Read that letter."

Edward, in amazement, took the proffered letter, and deliberately read it.

"MY DEAR EDWARD,

"Since you left me this morning, I feel my heart greatly relieved. Your soothing tenderness, and ready acquiescence with my wishes, have taught me to put a value on life. There is then an object I can love; and one who, in despite of my failings, can love me! Oh, how do I regret that I am unworthy the protection I experience from you, my preserver, and my best friend! To you do I owe the happiness of my life—a happiness as undeserved as unexpected; and yet to me may you attribute the estrangement of your uncle's affection.

Oh,

Oh, my beloved Edward, I was born to be a source of misery to others! I wish much to see you. Time lingers till I again embrace you. Yet I would not be importunate. When you can spare a moment from other avocations, let me be blest with your presence, as a singular circumstance I wish to impart took place soon after you left me this morning.—What name shall I sign?—I am at a loss; but believe me.

“Your affectionate and grateful

Lambeth.

“HELEN.”

“You are confounded, Sir,” said Augusta, with affected coolness. “Your heart is susceptible of love, I find. Will you deny that this letter is meant for you?”

“I do not deny it, Madam.”

“Do you know the writer?”

“I do.”

“And

“And——” Augusta paused. “You—love her?”

“I do;—but hear me, for heaven’s sake.”

A few words explained the mystery; and again the countenance of Augusta proclaimed the reign of hope.

“I have then injured Miss Ormerode,” cried she: “how shall I repair the effects of my impetuosity?”

Edward rejoiced to see her so calm, and hoped to lead the conversation to a less interesting topic; but she perceived his intention, and, in an imposing voice, said, “No, Fitzmaurice, no: seek not to draw me from the settled purpose of my heart. I have gone too far to recede. I will here learn my fate. You see before you a woman whose alliance has been aspired to by the first families in the kingdom, but whose soul scorns to gratify interest at the expense of love. I beheld you, from the moment I knew you, with affection. Your immense wealth prevented

prevented the declaration which trembled on my lips. My love is most disinterested: treat it not with contempt; but pity a woman, whose proud soul never before stooped to entreaty."

Edward's sensations at this epoch partook of compassion and contempt; yet he soothed the agitated Augusta; and in the course of the conversation she learned the fact of his re-established fortunes.

A burning blush dyed her cheeks at the discovery. She panted for breath, and fell almost fainting on the sofa.—Edward threw himself on his knees before her; and taking her hand, bathed it with his tears.—At length, after a struggle resembling that of the last pangs of nature, Augusta rose from the couch.

"'Tis done," cried she, in a voice scarcely human: "'tis done; and I am indeed contemptible—sunk lower than I could conceive degradation! But never more will I insult, by my presence, the dignified part of my sex. No: I fly them

them for ever. Fitzmaurice, I am yours—your mistress—your slave. You may despise me,—but——”

Here the voice of Augusta became inarticulate. Hollow, half-suppressed screams, burst at intervals from her bosom; and her vacant eye rolled gloomily on each surrounding object.

The situation of Edward was no less pitiable. Petrified with amazement, he doubted if he heard aright. That a woman of high rank, of hitherto unstained reputation, should solicit his hand with abject supplication, and on his refusal should propose his acceptance of her on any terms, seemed to be more the wandering of a perturbed brain, than reality. Augusta stood with the immobility of a statue. Edward again approached her. As he took her hand, sensation seemed to return. She fell into his arms, and burst into tears. Edward now lost all reflection. His brain was frenzied. He pressed her

her to his bosom, and imprinted a burning kiss on her lips.

But his wandering reason was recalled by a heavy groan. He started, and perceived the figure of Withers, who, with a look of sorrow, was standing at the door of the room. Edward sprang from the embrace of Augusta, who fell upon the sofa, covering her glowing face with her hands.

"How dare you, Sir—whence came you—and why?"

"I came out of the next room," said Withers; "and my purpose is to save you."

"I at present neither want your company nor advice."

"So I apprehend," said the cynic drily; "and yet I believe they were never more necessary. The presence of a third person is very troublesome in certain cases; but now, young man, I must desire that you will yourself leave the room. I mean to have the honour of escorting this lady to her carriage."

The

The commanding air which Withers assumed, instead of exciting, cooled the anger of Edward, which was lost in astonishment.

"I entreat you, Sir, to withdraw: I must yet speak a word to this lady."

"So must I," cried Withers. Then turning to Augusta, "You see before you, Madam, a man who has had some experience in the world, as my gray hairs testify. Yet my head was not always gray; and I can remember what it was to be young. I then loved to follow my own inclinations, and I have smarted for it. I am resolved to guard others from the snares into which I fell myself. You are a fine young lady; and it would be ten thousand pities if you were to turn out a mere *woman of the ton*. You have duties to fulfil; and the chief of these is a subjection of those violent starts of passion, which will ultimately be productive of misery and repentance. I should be sorry, so help me Heaven, to see so fine
a woman

a woman degraded from the rank she might adorn. And my young friend here is a noble youth:—long may he continue so! It would tear my soul if he were to turn out a scoundrel.—I overheard your conversation. Not a word escaped me. I do not blush to own my eaves-dropping. I hope it will turn to good account.—I pity you, Lady. You have fixed your affections on perhaps the only man who would not return them. Forget him, then. Look around you: honour, riches, titles, and birth court your acceptance. Efface, then, a transitory impression, and believe that your secret shall ever remain locked within my bosom.”

Angustia abruptly arose; and, addressing herself to Edward, “Before I leave you, Sir,” said she, in a tone of desperation, “allow me yet to speak a word. I am too degraded to mix with the virtuous world. I am sunk in my own esteem. I have made a proffer of my hand and fortune—I have even de-

scended to proposals I blush to repeat.— You have contemptuously scorned my love —— beware, Fitzmaurice, of my hate !”

She flew down stairs, and the chariot immediately drove away.

“ Spoken in the spirit of feminine meekness !” said Withers. “ I begin to fear I am treading on barrels of gunpowder. I shall not be easy till I have searched the cellars. I must cook my own dinner, or I shall have arsenic in my pease-soup.”

“ This, Sir, is trifling,” said Edward, gravely.

“ Upon my word though,” continued Withers, “ I do not think it unlikely. The poet was right when he talked of a ‘ woman scorned’.”

“ We are not in Italy,” said Edward, with a mournful smile.

“ No, nor in El Dorado,” replied Withers. “ Miss Delvalley has been, however, educated in the Italian school. She may bring up a few of the customs,

toms, and import the aqua toffana. Our nation, which used to boast originality, has now submitted to be a copyist. Why not adopt Italian tragedies in real life, as we do the German at our theatres?—I hope soon to leave London. I am sick of this maddening town. You are a rich man: you will not now be a recluse. I began to have a friendship for you; and I must retire alone.”

Edward earnestly entreated his Mentor to detail his plan. He acknowledged that although in the first burst of passion he had acceded to the proposal of seclusion from the world, he could not see how it could wholly be effected; and that the attempt would favour more of insanity than sentiment.

A smile stole over the furrowed countenance of the cynic; but Edward could not tell to what class it belonged: it neither expressed pleasure nor contempt. The smile was transient.

Withers fixed his penetrating eyes on those

those of his young friend, and said, "Do you really think that man stands in need of the assistance of his fellow-men? Do you think that virtue is the inmate of our planet? As years advance, you will be enabled to judge.—'I could a tale unfold,' but—as yet I may not—I must not bias your judgment. Live in the world, or retire from it, as reason dictates; and when your choice is decided, hear from me the history of a sixty years pilgrimage."

Edward eagerly requested Mr. Withers not to defer satisfying his curiosity, which he assured him sprung from no base motive. "I am confident," said he, "that the history of your life would have an influence on mine."

Withers, in silence, took up his hat, and strolled into the Park; and when Edward was preparing to follow him, a servant came with a message from the cynic, requesting Mr. Fitzmaurice not to leave the house for a day or two.

Good!

Willing

Willing to oblige the old man, Edward consented, not without a latent hope of prevailing on him to discover who and what he was.

THE OLD MAN'S STORY

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CHAP. X.

A Magdalen.

AFTER a sleepless night, Edward arose. He wrote a note to his aunt, that an unforeseen accident would prevent his calling on her for a few days. He then dressed, and hastened to his sister. She appeared in good spirits; and he inquired by what means she had conveyed her note of the day before. Helen replied, that she had left it herself at his lodgings. "I feared to enter," said she; "for I have no right to intrude where the virtuous resort."

Edward now readily divined the means by which the letter had fallen into the hands of Augusta. Withers had informed him that several letters had been left, and after-

afterwards taken away ; and he concluded that the note of his sister had been placed by the servant with the others on the table, and given together by mistake to Augusta, whose suspicion had prompted her to violate the sanctity of a seal.

Helen then informed her brother of the circumstance to which she alluded in her note.

Edward had scarcely left her the day before, when a genteel woman entered the apartment, and, begging pardon for her intrusion, asked if her name was Lawrence.

Helen blushed, and replied, that she had borne that name for some years.

“ Your real name, then, is Helen Fitzmaurice ? ”

Helen faintly answered that it was.

“ Were you ever married, Madam ? ”

“ Never.”

“ Do you know Mr. Emanuel Fitzmaurice ? ”

"I have heard my father mention a deceased brother of that name."

"Did he not die in Portugal?"

"No: I believe he fell a sacrifice to a contagious fever in the West Indies at a very early age."

"You, then, Madam, are the person I was to seek. I have been informed of your history.—Have you any plan in view for your future life?—Should you deserve, you will meet with encouragement."

Helen thanked the lady, with tears in her eyes, and observed, that as she had found a generous protector in her own brother, she could not, without ingratitude, be a burden to a stranger. The offer, she added, claimed her confidence; and she would own that it was her intention to enter into the society of the Magdalens.

"You may depend upon an admission," said the woman, "should your brother's application fail."

She

She then warned Helen not to watch the road she should take, and left the house.

Edward was much surprised when his sister related these mysterious circumstances. His suspicions first fell upon Withers;—but what motive could he have for mystery? Edward had trusted him with the secret of his sister's wrongs; and it was by his advice that he was confirmed in the plan of permitting her to become a Magdalen. Miss Delvalley knew not the abode of Helen; yet some confused thoughts entered Edward's mind. The idea of Aubrey Delvalley never occurred, either to brother or sister.

Three weeks passed away.—Withers, by his entreaties, prevailed on Edward not to leave him; while Mrs. Rigby murmured at his not residing altogether at her house. She however saw him daily; and her temper became as placid and soft as it was before harsh and repulsive.

One morning, as Edward passed through Sackville Street, he cast his eyes on the house of Augusta, and, to his surprise, observed that the furniture was advertised for sale. On inquiry, he heard that Miss Delvalley was gone to Lisbon, and that the premises and furniture were to be sold by auction.

Melancholy took possession of Edward's mind, which was not alleviated by the entrance of his sister into the Magdalen. Withers, at his request, had exerted himself to procure her the situation.

What a reflection for a man of feeling! A sister lost to the world at an early age, and pining in a society where few were willing inmates:—shut up with women, whose coarse conversation and indelicate manners must shock her repentant spirit, and hold to her view the despicable character she most wished to forget. Often had Edward determined to attend the service; but a fear of betraying his sensibility

bility withheld him. Withers urged him to be a man.

"Your sister," said he, "has doubtless cast an eye over the church, to discover her beloved protector. Do you wish to make her imagine that neglect is the cause of your non-appearance?"

This reflection conquered the reluctance of Edward, and he resolved to attend the service.—The Sunday arrived: the two friends silently walked towards the chapel. It was uncommonly crowded, and with difficulty they procured a seat.

Edward, addressing himself to a plain-drest elderly gentleman who sat next him, inquired the cause of this extraordinary concourse; and understood that a very popular preacher was to deliver the discourse. "If I had known this," added the gentleman, "I would have stayed at home: I hate to listen to affected sentiment and real bombast."

Edward smiled.—"You do not, then,"

said he, "approve of our modern pulpit eloquence?"

"Not altogether, Sir. Some clergymen, conscious that they can never rise at best above mediocrity, take no care of any thing but their tithes and surplice fees; and the prayers are run over as a matter of duty, with as little care as a boy repeats his Accidence."

"But our popular preachers—"

"Are generally affected coxcombs, who dress the hair with modish studied negligence, bestowing that time on their brainless skulls which were more usefully employed in attending to the souls of their parishioners. These ephemera display a seal ring (the diamond is now obsolete), with a white cambric handkerchief, which wafts perfume like the censer of a Catholic priest. They *hem* in a soft tone, begin the prayer in a voice but half a breath removed from silence, then rise in heroics, and, to impress *Christians* with fortitude,

titude, talk of cleansing *Augean stables*, with *Herculean* perseverance. Sometimes they pretend, nay do their best to weep, in order to affect their hearers; little imagining (such is the force of self-love) that one half are yawning, and the other fast asleep."

"You are severe, Sir."

"Justly so, I assure you. I am an old-fashioned man, Sir; I love to go to church with my family. My father did so before me; and I hope my children will continue the good custom when I am gone. But let us hear good sense for our pains. I hate to see a man of God, whose words should instruct and example edify, condescend to the actions of a fool and coxcomb. Such were not our Tillotsons, our Souths, and our Houghs. Admirably has our best of modern poets* criticised the effenced race of preachers."

"I am sorry our clergy stand no higher in your esteem."

"Do not mistake me, Sir," replied

* Cowper.

the gentleman gravely ; “ I do not mean to throw out exclusive censure—no, Sir ; we have among the clergy many brilliant characters, great and good men, from the bishop to the curate : we may censure a particular limb of a statue as mutilated, while we admire the exquisite symmetry of the other parts ; and I scruple not to affirm, that the great body of our clergy is composed of men of the highest talents, honour, and exemplary piety.”

Edward now looked towards the screen* which throwds the unfortunate daughters of vice from particular observation ; through its dusky gloom he perceived the figures of women, but their persons he could not distinguish. The service began ; it was delivered in a manner solemn and impressive ; the reader was evidently sensible of the duties of his office ; his articulation was clear and sonorous, yet abounding in

* In the Magdalen Hospital the unfortunate females are placed behind a screen, which is thin enough to show the figures of women, but not to permit distinction of person.

melody. The Creed and Psalms were sung by the Magdalens, and their sweet voices, echoing through the chapel, vibrated on the heart of Edward.

Still he heard not the voice of Helen, and fear took possession of his mind: was she ill, or had grief and misery deadened her vocal powers, which he well remembered to have been of the first order?

The prayers were now concluded, and an anthem was to be sung previous to the discourse. Mute attention reigned in the church, and suddenly the voice of Helen sounded in full melody; her powerful notes and exquisite taste chained every ear, and the congregation scarcely dared to breathe, lest it might interrupt the tide of harmony.

“O spare me a little, that I may recover my strength before I go hence, and be no more seen!”

Thus sang this real penitent. The words and music were in unison with her feelings; and the soft sigh with which she concluded

concluded a movement seemed prophetic of the happiness she might yet enjoy.

Edward's eyes, filled with tears, were fixed upon the gallery, when suddenly the anthem was interrupted—the voice of the songstress faltered—the strain was, however, renewed, but it was faint and trembling. Edward attributed the cause of this interruption to the keenness of her feelings; but he partook of her anguish when, turning his eyes towards the pulpit, he beheld——Aubrey Delvalley. Indignation swelled his heart—he caught his Mentor by the arm, and in a few words informed him of the circumstance. Withers clasped his hands with fervency;—“The hour of retribution is come,” said he, in a low and eager voice; “out of his own mouth shall he be judged.”

Delvalley was the popular preacher described by the neighbour of Edward; he pulled out his handkerchief, sprinkled it with otto of roses, laid his discourse with a delicate hand on the cushion, and flung himself

himself on the seat with languid elegance. His person was imposing, though his face was rather bloated by luxurious living; he was not yet forty, but the gout had, from the same cause, affected his feet, so that he was obliged to receive assistance when getting in or out of his chariot.

Rising from his seat when the anthem was concluded, he looked round the church with affected humility: a silence reigned, but a few short and loud sobs were heard from the gallery.—

At length, in a low voice, so as not to be heard at the distance of two seats, the preacher began. The preliminary prayer being concluded, he gave as a text the words of the prophet Nathan to David:

“And Nathan said unto David, THOU ART THE MAN!”

Having divided his discourse, as usual, into different heads, he expatiated upon the story of Rahab and the mercies of Heaven to the penitent; his language was easy and flowing, his humility well put on,

on, and the attentive congregation was inclined to pardon his previous foppery, in consideration of the excellence of his diction.

Suddenly the look of humility was superseded by a dictatorial demeanour.

“ But,” cried he (while his dark eye flashed with energy), “ if such be the miseries of the female world, what shall we say to the wretch who can calmly and deliberately form a plan for the destruction of innocence? who can systematically pursue the dictates of a depraved imagination, and banish virtue from the unsuspecting heart? Will it be believed that such monsters exist? Charity would answer, No; but Truth loudly proclaims the fact: nay, even in this assembly (which God forbid) may possibly be found a man, who, while he lifts his hand with hypocritical zeal to his Maker, would not (in his heart) startle at seduction.”

Loud and repeated sobs were heard from the gallery. Edward stood immovable; and

and fearing to be discovered, he took his station behind Withers, who, with the bitter sneer of conscious triumph, directed his undivided attention to the preacher.

"Is such a man aware," continued Delvalley, "that not *one* alone is the sufferer—that not only the object of his unhallowed pursuit is for ever consigned to misery, but that a *father* will curse his ill-fated offspring, that a *mother* will conquer the feelings of nature, and abandon her lovely daughter to a world where she will be rejected of all?"

A heavy groan, which seemed to convulse the bosom from whence it issued, was heard. Edward too well knew from whom it proceeded—he felt in agonies.

"Think you, O violators of all laws, human and divine," exclaimed Delvalley with fervour, "that if your conduct be unknown or unheeded by others, your own feelings will be dormant? Perhaps some of you may be looked up to with reverence and esteem; perhaps you may *pub-*
licly

licly declaim against what you in *secret* practise; but are you therefore happier? I say ye are not; for conscience, unslumbering conscience, will loudly cry to each, 'THOU ART THE MAN!'

Edward now quitted his station behind Withers, in hopes of catching the eye of the preacher, who continued in a loud voice—

"Lenity itself must here be silent; compassion cannot urge a plea; justice, stern justice, must hold the scale; according to the measure he meted shall it be meted to him again.—And what must be the dying horrors of a seducer? a just despair of——"

A voice issued from the gallery—

"Oh! condemn not thyself—for THOU ART THE MAN!"

Loud convulsive shrieks were heard; the Magdalens were discovered through the dusky screen to hasten round one of their companions who had fallen. They conveyed her away, and her screams were yet heard faintly from her apartment.

This

This confusion had no sooner subsided, than the congregation turned again to the preacher: his lips were pale and quivering, and his rubicund face assumed a purple hue. He had recognised the voice of Helen, which, in the anthem, he had not noticed, being more busily employed in surveying the fairer part of the assembly.

“Look at the good man!” exclaimed the gentleman who sat next to Edward; “how moved he appears to be! The unfortunate woman found his discourse too powerful for her feelings—it has disturbed him—what an excellent heart! I am glad I came here to-day.”

Delvalley attempted to compose himself: he again addressed the impatient congregation; but at the moment he lifted up his eyes, he met those of Edward fixed intently upon him. As if fascinated by the basilisk, he gazed in speechless horror; and, after many attempts to proceed, he abruptly concluded his discourse.

All the audience were in tears; some
wept

swept for fashion, some for feeling. Delvalley slowly descended from the pulpit; he tottered along the aisle leaning on the reader. He quickly disrobed, and hoping to escape inquiries, and avoid meeting Edward, as well as his malady would permit, he hastened to his chariot, which was at the door of the vestry. He had mounted a step by the assistance of his footman, when the man he most dreaded approached with Withers: who, as he passed him, exclaimed with energy, "THOU ART THE MAN!"

Delvalley heard no more—his hands relinquished their hold; he sunk groaning into the arms of his servant, and was carried, half-fainting, back into the vestry.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

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FITZMAURICE:

A NOVEL.

By WILLIAM FREDERICK WILLIAMS,

AUTHOR OF

SKETCHES OF MODERN LIFE; OR, MAN AS HE
OUGHT NOT TO BE.

IN TWO VOLUMES.—VOL. II.

The heart surrender'd to the ruling pow'r
Of some ungovern'd passion ev'ry hour,
Finds, by degrees, the truths which once bore sway,
And all their deep impressions, wear away.
So coin grows smooth in traffic current pass'd,
Till Cæsar's image is effac'd at last. COWPER.

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FITZMAURICE.

CHAP. I.

A sprained Ankle.

WHEN Delvalley reached his lodgings, a severe fit of the gout kept him close prisoner to his chamber; and the state of his mind did not tend to lessen bodily pain.—Helen lived, and in the circles of fashion he might meet her injured brother. Delvalley saw the fabric of promotion tottering to its base; to prop it, he resolved to put every art in practice to ruin the man who had saved his life, and to whom he owed so great obligation. He summoned his con-

fidant, Ainslie, who, despairing of Augusta, had turned his thoughts to a rich dowager of quality. Prudential reasons made the Captain keep up appearances with Delvalley, for, as he was a man of fashion and respectability, it was convenient to be sometimes seen with him in Pall-Mall or Bond-street.

"I am in a sad scrape, Ainslie," said Delvalley; "tell me what to do. Fitzmaurice was seen with his puritanic old aunt; he will be as rich as Cræsus: I wonder how far the story is circulated concerning his sister; but I will marry her at any rate, if the old woman chooses to come down handsomely."

"A likely story!" replied Ainslie, "how, in the name of common sense, can you talk in such a manner? Is not the girl in the Magdalen? Would they have put her there if they had any intention of *coming down*, as you call it? No, no, believe me, the fair princess is caged for life."

"I think," said Delvalley, "the Magdalen

calen is the best place for her; she was always whimpering and sobbing about what could not be helped. Unfortunate dog that I am!—My character, which I have with such care established, is on the point of encountering a rude shock; and, to mend the matter, my sister has, I thank her, gone off, the Devil knows where. It is reported that she is at Lisbon; and I am pestered with the kind enquiries of all the Lady Sneerwells of St. James's, relative to this sudden decampment; I have told more lies on the occasion, than an auctioneer or minister of state. I suspect, *entre nous*, that she is at the house of some of those advertising gentry, who accommodate ladies, *whose situation may require a temporary concealment*. Her house and furniture are sold. I am obliged to live by myself, and expences are high. Who can exist on a paltry eight hundred a year? Fitzmaurice has, doubtless, returned me the compliment I paid him some years ago; if the matter can be hushed up, so much the better, and

we will form a matrimonial *partie quarrée*—but do, Ainslie, advise me.”

“Why you have chalked out an excellent plan; the only misfortune is, that it can never succeed! Depend upon it, that your sister, having passed the Rubicon, will now acquire the cool prudence of many of her *townish* friends, and enjoy the honours of virtue with the pleasures of vice.”

“I wish she had possessed this prudence,” cried Delvalley, “but her passions are too violent; if, like me, she had learned how to throw a veil over her real sentiments, she might have lived a pattern to her sex!”

“As you are to your’s!—well, I must own you a very successful hypocrite! This then is my advice; be careful how you injure Fitzmaurice in the opinion of the world, till you are convinced that his sister is abandoned by him; you will then have an excellent plea for defamation; but be cautious of going too far, or you may get yourself into a confounded scrape, from which no after reflection can extricate you.

I may,

I may, however, say any thing, as I am not a party concerned; and he shall have a character from me good enough to get him black balled at any club of fashion."

"Ten thousand thanks, my best friend! How shall I express my gratitude but in words? Why a word of your's will go a great way in my favour: When the gout permits, let me beg of you to call on old Lady Margaret; trumpet my praises, and our wedding feast shall not be a spare one! You understand me."

While these modish sharpeners were planning their future schemes, Edward had taken leave of Withers, and removed to his aunt's. An elegant suite of apartments were allotted to him. Mrs. Rigby almost worshipped her nephew; she shut her doors on her spiritual advisers, and even cancelled the debt of Mrs. Lomely, though this last act cost her some pain in the performance.

The affairs of her late husband being settled, Mrs. Rigby prepared for her journey to Cornwall; but the house in Piccadilly

was to be retained for the use of Edward, when he visited the metropolis. His remonstrances were vain; Mrs. Rigby was obstinate, and the journey was fixed for the Wednesday following.

Having called on his sister, who expressed her gratitude for her quiet asylum, Edward walked to Park-street, to take leave of Withers, or, if possible, to prevail on him to join the party to the West of England. To his utter astonishment, he learned from the master of the house, that the cynic had left his apartments that morning; but a note was delivered to him containing these laconic expressions.

“I bid you farewell! I hope you may not turn out a scoundrel. Perhaps you may never see me more.

John Withers.”

No clue remained to trace this extraordinary man; and the morning arrived when

when the journey to Cornwall was to take place.

Mrs. Rigby was in high spirits; she chattered incessantly, describing her Cornwall villa, and the fine sporting country. Edward's thoughts were otherwise employed, and they were only recalled to the place where he was, by an elegant phaeton driving to the door.

"Do you mean, Madam, to travel in an open carriage?"

"Why not, my dear? the weather is fine (if it was not so hot and dusty) and I have a chaise umbrella."

Edward made no farther enquiry; yet it struck him, that in her first weeds the airy appearance of the journey might cause speculation no ways favourable. He attempted to assist her in mounting the phaeton; this was a work of difficulty; but after a quarter of an hour's exertion she was safely seated; and four spirited post-horses carried them far from the metropolis. But Mrs. Rigby had over-rated her powers.

powers. When she arrived at the end of the first stage, she was so overcome by the heat and dust, that she resolved to pursue her journey in post-chaises. The secret wish of her heart was, however, to enter her estate with triumphal honours; she, therefore, ordered a servant to drive the phaeton to Truro, whither her own horses were already sent forward: from this place she resolved to travel in her own equipage, as the distance was but seventeen miles.

Mrs. Rigby, during the journey (which, as she took short stages, lasted eight days) was all life and animation: she did not even talk of the dear departed, or quote a single text. On the ninth morning the phaeton was brought to the door: four beautiful bays, with harness of the newest fashion, charmed the eyes of the inhabitants of Truro. Mrs. Rigby gave away her shillings and sixpences to the poor who crowded round the wheels; and, attended by two servants on horseback, was driven by Edward towards her estate. Exultation
filled

filled her mind: her deep black veil was pinned back as gracefully as possible, and her weeds were as tasty as a St. James's-street mantua-maker could fancy.

"We shall now shew people who we are," cried Mrs. Rigby: "nothing is equal to a first impression: it stamps a respect: if we were to sneak into the village of Athacombe (where my mansion is situated) boxed up in a paltry chaise, we should be taken for scrubs: nothing is like a first impression; remember that, dear Edward, nothing is like a first impression."

Mrs. Rigby continued her harangue with the highest self-satisfaction, till she came within two miles of her estate, when one of the servants, riding up to the phaeton, begged Edward to stop, as the linch-pin was loose, and they might be overturned.

Mrs. Rigby, unable from her rotundity to help herself, had recourse to the specific generally adopted by ladies in danger, and screamed with the most violent exertion.

Edward begged her to be composed, assuring her that the man would immediately remedy the defect.

"Oh! take me out! take me out! my dear, dear Edward, do take me out!"

"There is no danger, my dear Madam, indeed."

"Don't tell me, don't tell me: I must get out, or I shall be kill'd."

Edward, finding that her fears were too powerful to be controlled by reason, leapt from the phaeton; and by the assistance of the servants, Mrs. Rigby got safely (though not without difficulty) to the ground.

The linch-pin was instantly put to rights; but when the lady attempted to scale the phaeton a second time, she suddenly screamed and fell, declaring that her leg was broke.

Edward, shocked at the accident, endeavoured to persuade her she was mistaken, and she was soon convinced that he was in the right; but her ankle had received a most violent sprain. What was to be done
in

in this dilemma? Her great weight and unwieldy size rendered it a dangerous, if not impossible, expedient to *lift* her into the phaeton.

Edward sent a servant to the mansion to procure a conveyance; but Mrs. Rigby's pain grew so intolerable, that she declared she should die, and actually fainted away.

Edward was now greatly distressed: he called the servant who remained, and begged him to assist in raising his aunt from the ground: they even attempted to carry her, but the man confessed his inability. Edward then ordered him to walk on in hopes of hastening some passengers to their assistance: in the mean time Mrs. Rigby, recovering from her swoon, exclaimed, "Oh me! Oh me! this is a judgment for my cruel and unkind treatment of the Rev. Mr. McGregor, and the Rev. Mr. Squires! A judgment always follows any who shew a disrespect for the pious, as the Rev. Mr. Huntabout shewed plainly by a dream he had the other day: Oh me,

I repent my misdeeds; I would not admit those comfortable men to my table of latter days: I am afraid my poor soul will suffer for it: who would risk their precious soul to save a few pounds of beef, or a fowl or two? And these good men seldom ate more. Dear Edward, do pray, step into the phaeton: you will find a book of hymns, and a bottle of brandy, in the seat. I must select some appropriate melody on this occasion."

Edward prepared to obey her, and had just got his foot on the step when she called to him for assistance, and again fainted away.

This second fit lasted longer than the first; and before she recovered her senses, a labouring man approached them.

"Chray Jamy," exclaimed the rustic, "the poor gentlewoman be quite gone in my mind: this comes of drinking of a morning; the least drop oversets a body then, thof they may be able to pull gallon after gallon with the best o'nights."

Edward,

Edward, regardless of the insinuation conveyed by this speech, requested the man's assistance.

"Where be you come from?" said the fellow.—"From Truro. I will satisfy your curiosity afterwards, but give your assistance now." "The lady be so mortal big, I don't know what we shall do."—He, however, proposed laying her across a five-barred gate which lay in a dry ditch, and thus carrying her as in a litter. Mrs. Rigby, who was by this time recovered, consented to any thing in preference to lying in the open air, exposed to the sun and dust. The gate was procured, but it was old and rotten: the bars could not support the weight, and they snapt before Mrs. Rigby could be raised from the ground.

"Is there no cart to be procured?" demanded Edward. The fellow replied that it was market day at a town some miles beyond Athacombe, and that a cart could not be procured for love or money.

"But howsomever," added he, "I knows
of

of a waiy, only madam would not like it, mayhap? There be a special strong wheelbarrow in tha key Field: it's almost new, and has only carried the dung for about a three weeks or so. I will put my frock over Madam's gown: it's but poorish and coarse to be sure; but then Madam won't get dirtied."

"Do so, do so," cried Mrs. Rigby, sobbing: "I deserve to be cloathed in sackcloth."

"Nay, nay, haud ye, haud ye, not quite so bad as that neither; my frock be of as good canvas as any in Bodwin—sackloth!—not so bad as that neither—sackloth!"

Edward appeased the man's rising anger by the irresistible power of pecuniary gratification. With some difficulty Mrs. Rigby was seated in her humble vehicle. Having tied the horses to a gate, Edward, and the labourer, alternately, wheeled her along, while she continually exclaimed, "This comes of pride and vain-glory: my poor heart was puffed up by vanity: all is vanity and

and vexation of spirit. I (poor sinner that I am!) have had my share of both: then what a horrid first impression! to be trundled in a wheelbarrow like a heap of ashes, or as a woman given to drinking!"

She then began to weep and lament in most pathetic terms the time when she gave three hundred guineas for a phaeton, which she resolved never again to enter.

CHAP. II.

A deserted Niece.

IN a beautiful mansion, and in a place where her wealth was the object of reverence, Mrs. Rigby soon recovered from the mortification of the unfortunate first impression. But in less than two months a vexatious lawsuit, about a farm of five-and-twenty pounds a year, carried Edward, with every wish of losing it, to London.

Mrs. Rigby made no scruple of employing her nephew as her steward, but she sweetened the task by extolling his goodness to a *poor lone woman*.

Though avaricious in every other respect, to Edward she was all munificence: he drove the unfortunate phaeton, was attended by two servants, and the house in Piccadilly was, much against his will, opened for his reception. Had not the affair which called him to town concerned his aunt, he would
have

have dropped it altogether, but a principle of honour obliged him to transact her affairs with punctuality; he however determined to reimburse the sufferers, should the decision be fatal to their interests: thus did Mrs. Rigby's munificence to her nephew counteract her trifling selfish avarice. One morning, as Edward was listening to a lawyer, with "sad civility," a servant informed him that a woman wished to speak with him.

He desired her to leave her message, as he was engaged.

The servant retired, but soon returned with the card of a toy-shop; and Edward was struck with the name of Lomely. He had almost forgotten the name of the person whose appearance had so much interested him some months before. Indeed his munificence was so diffuse, that it was a matter of difficulty to remember the objects.

"Well, Sir," continued the attorney, "the estate aforesaid—hem—where was I—Oh! two stables, two barns, two fish-ponds."

Edward almost wished him at the bottom
of

of one of them, and complaining of indisposition, begged to defer the reading till the morrow.

The attorney, who viewed with awe the blue silk sofa on which his client was seated, with many bows withdrew, and Mrs. Lomely entered the room.

She begged many pardons for the intrusion. Edward kindly desired her to be seated, and asked what services he could render her.

"Are you still so good, Sir," cried Mrs. Lomely, with a deep sigh, "I sadly feared you were an altered man."

Edward assured her that his sentiments had suffered no alteration in any respect.

"Ah, Sir," said she, shaking her head, "how then, to me, can you be all that is mild and benevolent, and all that is cruel and ungenerous to Miss Ormerode?"

"To Miss Ormerode!"

"She is in great distress, Sir; she may have been a bad girl, but she is a real penitent: Had you but seen how hard she worked for
her

her bread!—and when you consider that she was virtuous before she saw you—”

“Madam?”

“When you consider that her seduction is owing to yourself alone, oh, Mr. Fitzmaurice, you must, you cannot but pity her.”

Edward started from his seat. “What do you say, Mrs. Lomely? What misfortune has befallen Miss Ormerode, and how far am I implicated in it?”

“Of that, Sir, you are the best judge: but for the love of mercy do not let her languish in a prison—her aunt is inexorable—it was at her suit she was arrested.”

Edward had seen little of Miss Ormerode, yet that little was enough to interest him in her favour; but now the charge of Augusta occurred to his recollection. Selina had, as he thought, wantonly asserted, that she had heard a confirmation of a particular attachment from his own mouth. He mused, and willing to be certain that his suspicions of her character were founded, he turned to Mrs. Lomely, and said, “Did Miss Ormerode,

Ormerode, Madam, inform you that *I* was her seducer?"

"Miss Ormerode, Sir, declared that her present distress had you for its primary cause; and her aunt has been more explicit, she shewed me the letters which"—"You will drive me mad, Mrs. Lomely—tell Miss Ormerode that her present odious calumny but confirms the ill opinion I before entertained of her veracity. I pity, and upon contrition will relieve her, but for this vile imputation—"

"Hold, Sir," exclaimed Mrs. Lomely, "Miss Ormerode has not sent me as a mediator—I come of my own accord; and surely, surely, Mr. Fitzmaurice, she merits your compassion."

"I will not think on what she merits," said Edward, recovering from a transient fit of anger, "take this from me, tell her that I forgive her aspersions, and hope that her repentance of them will permit me to be of farther service."

He tendered a note of fifty pounds.

Mrs.

Mrs. Lomely, though she was convinced of Selina's innocence, could not refuse the tempting paper: she said that she was afraid Miss Ormerode would not accept it; but as she was in want of the necessaries of life, she might perhaps be prevailed upon. "I wish," added she, "that you would explain this sad affair between yourselves. I think I could almost swear there is a mistake: you are so good, Sir; and, if I may speak my mind, Miss Ormerode is very good too."

Mrs. Lomely now took her leave, and Edward recollected, with amazement, that he had not asked the simple question how the acquaintance began between her and the young calumniator.

Mrs. Lomely, after her creditor had cancelled her debt, found her very rigid economy no longer necessary, and by the assistance of some friends at Liverpool, opened a small shop in the vicinity of Oxford Street. Her industry was rewarded, and every thing she undertook was attended by prosperity: her
eldest

eldest girl assisted her labours, and the gaily of the two younger repaid her for past sufferings. Her first floor, which she furnished in a creditable manner, she let to persons whose character would bear investigation.

Selina had resided some weeks at the house of her aunt, Mrs. Beddome, whose kindness towards her knew no abatement; till one morning, alarmed by shrieks from the parlour, she ran to enquire the cause. She was met in the hall by her aunt, who, with the voice of a fury, bade her instantly quit the house.

Selina endeavoured to pacify her, but Mrs. Beddome, who possessed no argumentative talent, supplied the deficiency by invective; and as Selina attempted to approach her, lifted an arm not wanting in ponderosity, which, had it fallen as intended, would have laid her niece at her feet; it however only demolished a chamber-clock, which in its turn shivered to atoms a valuable china jar.

“Get out of my house, you viper!”

screamed

screamed Mrs. Beddome, "look what you have made me do! Oh you wicked girl! I shall see you flaunting about in an old chariot, with a black boy behind it, I shall. But pack up your ails—oh you naughty girl!—that ever a niece of mine should — get out of my house, Miss Good-for-nothing; I'll never see your face again: it is no wonder that the French gain so many victories abroad in foreign parts, when such horrible profanation is suffered at home; we shall soon be overrun by those atheistical scum of the earth!—Joseph, send for the man who puts the clock to rights.—Betty, pick up the fragments of that dear jar; I'll see if somebody cannot piece it.—If all Europe were to sink into the sea, or if I had suddenly dropt down as dead as a stone, I should not have been more surprized than at your vile conduct, Miss.—That jar has been in our family ever since my late uncle's grandfather was called to the bar. The whole universe will be in confusion at your scandalous behaviour,

haviour, you huffy : go, get from under my roof before it falls upon your head."

Selina, terrified, ran into the street without hat or cloak, and had walked near a mile before she found herself the object of curiosity and attention. Recovering her recollection she turned into a little toy-shop, leaned her head upon the counter, and sitting down, burst into tears.

Mrs. Lomely, who was the mistress of the house, seeing a girl, apparently not eighteen, thus deeply distressed, begged her to walk into a little closet, she called her back parlour. Here she remained two hours ; and the conference ended by Selina's agreeing to take the first floor at a moderate rent. Mrs. Lomely, however, demanded a reference. Selina timidly mentioned Mrs. Beddome ; but added, that she feared malicious reports had irritated her aunt against her. Mrs. Lomely was affected by this candid confession : she left Selina, and walked to Red Lion Square ; she was admitted to
Mrs.

Mrs. Beddome, who was busied in reading Mrs. Carter's Epictetus.

Mrs. Lomely explained the motive of her visit; and Mrs. Beddome, laying down Epictetus, flew in a violent passion.

"My Niece, that was, sends you here for a character, Madam; well, I vow I never heard the like of this! She went away without one: let her go to service; her trumpery thirty pounds a year may support her then; but don't let her send for a character to me."

Mrs. Lomely begged to know what crime was laid to the young lady's charge; and Mrs. Beddome, drawing herself up with great dignity, said, "You shall judge, Madam; you shall judge Mrs. - - - - what's your name, pray, Ma'am?"

"Lomely."

"You shall judge I say, Mrs. Lomely, for you look like a very decent sort of a creditable person. My poor sister married against my father's consent: he was not very rich; but he acted as if he had the re-

venue of a duke, for he never forgave her. I did all I could to reconcile them; but my father said, that if I was not so ugly he should think I was pleading the cause of disobedience against my own elopement. My sister's husband was killed by a tile falling on his head, which was droll enough; considering how many dangers he had run in the wars; his poor wife, who had two children before, was so much shocked, that she died of the small pox soon after she had given birth to that unfortunate girl, Selina Ormerode."

Mrs. Beddome wiped her eyes, and drank a dish of chocolate, complaining that it did not froth well. Mrs. Lomely was interested, and begged the narrator to proceed.

"Well," continued Mrs. Beddome, "my father was fond of hunting, and used sometimes to go on a visit to Sir John Peckingham, who was created Lord Sapley about two months ago. Well, and so says Sir John to my father; Beddome, says he, I wager that I am the boldest rider of the two: my
father

father did not like to have his courage questioned, and swore (my poor father would swear sometimes when he was in a passion) that he would follow wherever the Baronet would lead, if the Baronet would do as much in his turn another day. Well, Madam, they went out, and the first leap that presented itself was a hedge as high as the monument : over went Sir John ; but my poor father being too much in a hurry, tumbled over his horse's head, and broke his neck : a surgeon was called in ; but he declared the case to be desperate, as the patient had been dead more than half an hour."

"Why am I told all this," thought Mrs. Lomely.

"Well, Mrs. ———, I always forget names—oh—ay—Lomely. Well, Mrs. Lomely, the small-pox seized the two eldest girls, and proved fatal : so when I was enabled to serve little Selina, I did ; for I took her home to my own house, meaning to live single for her sake, and for some other

reasons. She was a sweet girl, I confess, and used to divert many idle moments : at length a lady of fashion, when she was fifteen, asked me to let her reside in Hanover-square. I thought the girl might get handsomely married, so I let her go ; but Selina told me that the lady made too free with noyau.—Dear me, now I think of it, Mrs. Lomely, will you take a glass ? I have it just at hand.”

Mrs. Lomely civilly declined the offer.

“Well,” continued Mrs. Beddome, “I insisted on her staying ; but the poor girl moped and pined till a Miss Delvalley, worth I don’t know how many millions of money, took her to her fine house in Sackville-street : it used to delight me to see Selina drive up to the door with a coachman and footman, and lamps before the windows. But mercy upon us all ! Miss Delvalley turned her out of doors for misconduct, and the little wretch made out her story so well, how a gentleman had belied her, that I, poor silly woman, was quite taken in. I believed

believed every syllable: but this morning my maid brought me a packet, dropt by this artful gypsy—oh that a niece of mine should; but you shall judge, Mrs. Lomely, you shall judge.”

Mrs. Beddome gave four letters into the hands of her visitor, who opened them with ardent curiosity.

Note 1.

“ My beloved Selina may be easy with respect to Adolphus: he is quite recovered: the Hampstead air has wrought miracles. But while I rejoice at the safety of my child, my heart feels a void which nothing but the presence of his mother can supply. When will you meet me, Selina? Has the cottage yet any charms for you?

E. F.”

The next was in Selina's handwriting.

Note 2.

“ Miss Delvalley will go to the opera this evening

evening—I mean to have a head-ache—fly then, Fitzmaurice, to your

Selina.”

Note 3.

“Your ridiculous Aunt arrived very mal-a-propos: indeed how can she ever be otherwise than a *bore*? My knees were a little cramped by my awkward situation in the closet; but the future shall compensate for the ridiculous distress of the past. Good night to my Selina.

Ed. Fitzmaurice.”

Note 4.

“Make yourself easy, my beloved girl, the housemaid did not hear me; she could not: why will you conjure up imaginary distresses? Rely upon the love and ever watchful care of your

Fitzmaurice.”

“There’s for you,” exclaimed Mrs. Beddome, when Mrs. Lomely had done reading, “did ever mortal hear the like?—He
calls

calls me a *boar* too!—Surely, he knew that I was of the feminine gender: it was some love quarrel between this fellow and Selina Ormerode that caused her precipitate departure from the protection of Miss Delvalley; she almost confessed as much, for she said that a gentleman had behaved very ill to her, but she would not mention his name.” Mrs. Lomely now timidly ventured to hint at the youth of the culprit, and her evident repentance, “Consider, dear Madam,” said she, “Miss Ormerode cannot be eighteen.”

“Fiddle-di-dee,” exclaimed the enraged spinster, “eighteen! Why girls of eighteen ought to take more care than at any other time; but she was of age last April. I would not give her a bit of bread if she were starving in the streets.”—

Mrs. Beddome, in spite of her vehemence, was really a worthy character. Her outrageous displeasure against Selina arose from the high opinion she formed of female chastity: she considered all virtue as com-

prized in that one point. She was devout, charitable, steady in her friendships, lenient in her aversions, and justly supported a character of every mild virtue; yet she would associate with persons of a very contrary nature, provided no suspicions could attack the rigid propriety of their conduct in one respect; touch that string, and the fires of Smithfield were too lenient, in her opinion, to punish the offenders. She was one of those

“Who thought the nation ne’er would thrive”

till some very strong measures were taken with the frail sisterhood: in short, the punishment of Ravailac was scarcely adequate to the demerits of one who had burst through the pale of virtue.

Mrs. Lomely still ventured to plead for the young culprit: “She appears so mild and good,” said the generous woman.

“I don’t know, nor I don’t care how she appears.”

“She will die, Madam, if you persist in your displeasure.”

“A fiddle-

"A fiddle-stick's-end! She is only sorry because I won't shelter her: indeed in her case repentance is vain. She knows she has no mercy to expect in this world or the next. I am sorry for her; but 'tis all over—'tis too late now; she shall however hear from me; she shall be made an example of for the benefit of all young women. Don't attempt to plead for her, Madam; I must beg you to quit my house: you may be as bad as she for what I know; plead indeed for a ——! Bless me, what was I going to say? Oh, fie upon it! Here, Mary ——"

A neatly dressed girl entered the room.

"Tell me, Mary Collins," exclaimed Mrs. Beddome, "did not Miss Selina Ormerode sleep in the best bed, with crimson damask curtains, that I keep for Lady Barbara Winterbottom, and my cousin General Nokes, and other persons of fashion?"

"Yes, Ma'am."

"Were not the sheets the same that were in the cedar chest, and which I never

take out except on extraordinary occasions?"

"Yes, Ma'am."

"And did you not pick up these abominable letters?"

"Y - - e - - s, Ma'am, sure I did."—

The girl appeared confused, and went out of the room.

Mrs. Beddome now refused to hear any thing farther; and Mrs. Lomely left the house, pitying while she condemned the errors of Selina. She wished, however, to see how far lenity might operate on a youthful mind; resolving, if possible, to prevent future crimes, rather than let those crimes pursue their career till they must necessarily call down punishment.—Legislators! cannot your hearts be actuated by the same feelings?—Selina's answers to the half hints of Mrs. Lomely, only confirmed the latter in the idea of her lodger's criminality: the poor girl confessed that she owed her misfortunes, primarily, to a gentleman of whose heart she had formed a high opinion. Little
thinking

thinking in what sense her words would be taken.

She soon learned to accommodate her mind to her fortunes: if a sigh escaped her, it was of pity for a bad world; she regretted not its vanities. Embroidery had formed a part of her amusement, it now became her support: such was her industry that, in a short time, she amassed a small sum adequate to relieve her necessities. But the dream of peace soon vanished. One morning, as she was sitting at work with Mrs. Lomely, a man entering the room, informed her, that she was his prisoner, at the suit of Rachael Beddome. More dead than alive, she was conveyed to the house of a sheriff's officer. Two hundred pounds, which was the sum claimed for board and lodging, was more than Mrs. Lomely could offer to be bail for: she, however, procured a habeas-corpus for the King's Bench, whither the unoffending victim of duplicity took up her wretched abode.

CHAP. III.

Matrimony.

THE morning after Edward had sent the note of fifty pounds to Selina, a letter was delivered to him; the superscription was in her hand-writing; he hastily tore it open, and found, in a blank sheet of paper, his note returned. Amazed at such contradictory behaviour, he resolved to see her; and dispatched his servant to Mrs. Lomely with the following note:

“ Miss Ormerode.

“ Mr. Fitzmaurice would be particularly gratified, if Miss Ormerode would allow him the privilege of half an hour’s conversation.

Piccadilly.”

The servant returned with a verbal message, that “ Miss Ormerode could not see company.”

Edward

Edward almost doubted if he were awake: resolving to elucidate this mystery, he proceeded to Mrs. Lomely, and begging her to be his advocate, told her that some villany, which he could not fathom, had certainly been put in practice."

"I believe it, Sir," said Mrs. Lomely; "but indeed I know not what to think; after the letters I have seen, I cannot but conclude that some portion of guilt must attach itself either to you or Miss Ormerode. Pardon my frankness; you have been a generous benefactor to me, and I am not ungrateful, believe me."

Edward hastily enquired what letters she alluded to; and, after some hesitation, Mrs. Lomely informed him of the scene which had passed at Mrs. Beddome's.

To the house of that lady did Edward repair, but was informed that she was gone into the country for a week or ten days. Vexed, disappointed, and bewildered, he returned to Mrs. Lomely, and begged her to attend him to the prison.—Here he
again

again renewed his request to Selina by message ; but all Mrs. Lomely's rhetoric could not avail—the insulted prisoner peremptorily refused to see him.

Edward now wrote with a pencil on a card :

“ Some horrible deceit has been practised against your repose ; I know not how I can be implicated in it : permit me to elucidate this mystery. *E. F.*”

“ I am waiting at the prison gate.”

Mrs. Lomely declared that she was almost afraid to take the letter ; she said, that though Miss Ormerode was usually all gentleness, she felt quite awed when she last spoke to her. She is not very handsome, Sir, “ said Mrs. Lomely,” but I declare her fine eyes flashed with such majesty, that I thought I saw the greatest queen in the world before me ; and yet, poor thing, she is only a prisoner.

She then departed, and soon returned with

with joy in her countenance, announcing Miss Ormerode's acquiescence with his wishes.

Edward darted through the prison gate, followed by Mrs. Lomely, who directed him to the apartment of Selina. When they entered the room, the gentle sufferer rose from her humble seat. She was dressed in a dark cotton gown; skeins of silk of various colours were spread on the table before her : a splendid muslin dress, which she was beginning to embroider, to decorate some votary of dissipation, formed a contrast to the forlorn appearance of all around.

Edward was bereft of the power of utterance. Selina, re-seating herself, affected an air of composure ; and though her voice faltered, she said, with a smile, it was in a very different situation we last met, Mr. Fitzmaurice ; but the vicissitudes of life ought not to astonish ; ill-fortune,

“ Like the toad, ugly and venomous,
Bears yet a precious jewel in its head,”

and may teach me to exert energies which
a state

a state of tranquil prosperity would have permitted to lie dormant."

Edward, without attending to her, exclaimed "Heavens! Madam; how came this sad reverse? and how am I implicated in it?"

"I do not wish to reproach you, Mr. Fitzmaurice; why will you, why will you force me to do so? Let all that is past be forgotten by you, and leave me to my fate: if my forgiveness be necessary to your peace of mind, you have it freely."

"Did I need forgiveness, I would humble myself to the earth before you: I am conscious of no crime. I meet your questions; put me to the trial; I shall not shrink from it."

Selina looked at him reproachfully.—
"Know you not," said she, "of some actions, which, if revealed to the world, might severely teach you the bitter lesson of repentance."

"My actions, Madam," replied Edward, warmly, "seek no concealment. I do not
boast

boast of a greater degree of moral rectitude than falls to the lot of man ; but surely no action of mine (you force me to speak) has been or will be such as a man of the strictest integrity would blush to own."

" Were we by ourselves ——" said Selina, timidly.

" There is no necessity for that," interrupted Edward ; " I have already declared my readiness to submit my actions to the test : I am prepared to answer any question you may propose."

" Do you then imagine, Sir," exclaimed Selina, her eyes sparkling with the conscious dignity of offended virtue, " that my desire of a third person's absence originated in a fear for myself ? This injury is intolerable ! Tell me then, Mr. Fitzmaurice, how can you reconcile to your honourable feelings the horrors to which you have exposed me ? Treating me as a propagator of falsehood ; and then, by forgeries, blasting my fair fame for ever !"

Edward, overwhelmed with amazement, could only stammer inarticulate sounds.

Selina

Selina continued—"Could you find no other means to ingratiate yourself with Miss Delvalley? Did you think me your enemy? Much were you deceived: I ever promoted your interest in that quarter; perhaps more than ——." She paused.

Edward earnestly requested her to proceed; he utterly denied the charges: "I am convinced," said he, "either that the whole is a fabrication of a concealed enemy, or that circumstances have been misrepresented. You are incapable of deceit; your voice is not the voice of guilt; your appearance evinces injured rectitude."

Selina, thus urged, demanded what were his motives for denying to Miss Delvalley, that a conversation had taken place between them in the park.

This brought on an explanation, and Selina, blushing, confessed herself to blame.

The strange circumstance of the letters was next discussed: these Edward resolved upon obtaining; but as Mrs. Beddome was out of town, and the servants knew not whither

whither she was gone, he was obliged to call patience to his aid. He, however, insisted upon liberating Miss Ormerode; and she returned to her old apartments at the house of Mrs. Lomely.

A month passed away, during which time Edward was her constant visiter: her many good qualities made a deep impression upon his heart, and he obtained an avowal of her love for him.

Mrs. Rigby consented to the match with a good grace; but in her letter said, that she wished her nephew had married a woman of fortune. "Nothing, my dear Edward," added she, "could prevent my being present on so joyful an occasion, but a fit of the gout, and the concerns of my immortal soul: the Reverend Mr. Tone is now my spiritual guide; he bids me look upon the world as a mushroom, which is growing to-day, and stewed and eaten to-morrow!"

Mrs. Beddome now returned to London. Edward called frequently at her house; but

but her doors were shut against him. He, at length, wrote to her, denying the letters to be his, and begging permission to examine the forgery: he concluded by observing, "that to refute the calumny altogether, nothing was wanting but her consent to an union with her niece."

To this Mrs. Beddome returned the following answer:

"Sir,

"Your's received; and I cannot say that I am greatly honoured by the favour, because all who write to me are generally people of unspotted character. You ask me to let you look at the letters which pass between you and my niece; but I know who would be fool then, so beg to be excused. I always speak my mind, which every virtuous person ought to do; and I defy any body, though I have lived five-and-fifty years in the world, to say any thing to the prejudice of my character; and
I will

I will take care they never shall. As for your denying the letters to be your's, I believe it to be a wicked lie. I called upon Miss Delvalley, to make myself sure, but she was not in town, so I went upon a fool's errand; for I know that my servants are all honest, and my niece an abandoned reprobate hussy.

“ I had hoped, by shutting her in a prison, to secure her from the evil doings of the world; and did intend (I fear the act was sinful) to have supplied her necessities there; for to such as fall from virtue no mercy ought to be shewn in this world; and as for the next, fire and brimstone is too good for them.

“ You act like a jackanapes when you ask my permission to marry my niece. What have I to do with her? Would you have me for to go for to aid and abet a wanton Miss? Fie, upon it, young man! You are no better than a jacobin and innovator! This is my plain answer (for I always speak
my

my mind); you may both do just as you please, for you are both in the high road to perdition. Which is all at present, from

Your humble Servant,

Rachael Beddome."

The style and sentiments of this letter, would at any other time have raised a smile of pity. But now Edward resolved, by a public marriage, to counteract the deeds of prejudice: authorized by the timid consent of Selina, he determined no longer to delay their union, which took place at Mrs. Rigby's, in Piccadilly; several persons of rank of both sexes being present.

CHAP. IV.

Care only wakes, and moping pensiveness—
With meagre discontented looks they sit,
And watch the wasting of the midnight taper.
Such vigils must *I* keep; so wakes my soul,
Restless and self-tormented.

JANE SHORE.

Miss Delvalley, after her last conference with Edward,—(a conference, which, by destroying her hopes, left her nothing but shame and regret),—in an agony of despair, flew from London, and immured herself in a private lodging at Bath; her soul shrunk from society; she felt herself the slave of impetuous passion, and dreaded the eye of a world she had renounced. In agonies, little short of frenzy, she reflected, that as Edward had slighted her proffered love, so likewise might he expose her—a total change took place in her bosom, and hatred and vengeance superseded the softer emotions. Degraded in
4 the

the eyes of the world, Augusta imagined that no act could cover her with additional ignominy, and, abandoning every virtuous principle, she meditated how to inflict misery on a man whose strict honour ought to have ensured her gratitude. Her long residence in Italy, rendered the idea of affassination familiar—but death seemed to her a desirable retreat—her wish was, to see Edward wretched, and triumph in his misery.

Among some papers left in a drawer by Selina, in her hurry of removal from Sackville-street, Augusta found a small miniature of Edward—she knew that Selina had a talent for painting, but the highly finished manner in which this was executed, plainly proved the pleasure the artist experienced in the task.—This circumstance was to Augusta, “confirmation, strong as proof of holy writ,” and she doubted not but that Edward returned the love of her companion.—Enraged at being slighted for the dependant Selina, she resolved to
injure

injure Edward in the object of his affections.

The mistress of the house had been very officious about the person of Augusta, often bringing in her tea or arranging her room—it sometimes happened, that her lodger was surpris'd in tears, which made the sagacious landlady conceive her to be some young creature eloped from a father or husband.

In a small lodging, at an obscure part of Bath, did Augusta reside some time, under the feigned name of Smith—she never stirr'd from her apartments, but ruminated night and day on plans of vengeance. Her mental exertions were too powerful for her constitution, and at times her behaviour was so wild and inconsistent, that her landlady often suspected a derangement of intellect.

Sad reverse of fortune! the youthful, gay, rich and innocent Augusta, driven from a world she was calculated to adorn, by the indulgence of unrestrained impetuosity;

sity; exposed to the sneers of malignity, the taunt of the unfeeling, and even become an object of curiosity to her interested landlady.

This woman had been formerly a milliner at the west end of the metropolis—she was well known to many women of quality; and the coroneted coaches without the door, prevented, in a great measure, any animadversions which might have been made on what was passing within. Mrs. Champney having amassed large sums of money, retired from her business, (which did not solely consist of selling crape and moss roses) and removed to an obscure part of Bath, where an occasional right honourable visiter would sometimes pass an evening.—Indeed, long habit was become nature in this woman, and she would rather manage an intrigue, gratis, than remain in inaction.

Augusta, one evening, retired to a small apartment where her writing desk was placed, and, to her surprise, heard the

name of Smith repeated by persons in the next room—the partition consisted only of deal-boards, covered with a coloured paper. Augusta, tremblingly alive to suspicion, tore off a part of it, and distinctly overheard the conversation.

“Well, well, don’t *bore* me any more about that; you know I have not the wealth of Cræsus, nor can I, like Midas, turn all I see to gold by a touch.”

“What do you tell me about the old Romans for?—no, no, Sir, I am resolved to bring you to my terms, or you shall not get a peep at her.”

“Now, the devil take me if ———”

“There is no necessity to take the Lord’s name in vain about it—see her you shall not, without you give me what I ask—Come, come, Sir, as I have left off business in a great way, and only practise for such quiet persons as yourself, it is but just I should have my proper fee.”

“Take it then, and now for Miss Smith.”

“And now, Sir, she is, I confess, in the

next room—but be cautious in this affair—I keep, heaven be praised, the best of characters : if you mistake her room for another, when you are going out, why you must ask her pardon, you know, and I cannot think of a prettier introduction.”

Here the conversation was carried on in a lower key, and Augusta trembled at the idea of her humiliation—she took a hasty retrospect of her conduct, and found, with horror, that she alone was to blame. A sudden noise was heard in the passage, but before Augusta could rise to lock the door, it was opened by a gentleman, who, advancing into the middle of the room, stooped short, and in a hurried manner said :—“ I ask your pardon, Madam, I imagined I should find Mrs. Champney here.”—

He would have proceeded, but his eyes encountered those of Augusta : both were equally surprised, the gentleman was no other than Delvalley !

Forcing

Forcing his brow into a frown, though much tempted to smile at the unexpected rencontre, "Augusta," cried he, "is it thus you disgrace your family? Have you set all decorum at defiance, and do you immure yourself in an obscure lodging, without acquainting your nearest and dearest friend? Are you not aware of the misery which tore the heart of a brother, who loves you but too well? a brother, who to save you, has flown from London, when urgent business absolutely required his stay?" "A brother who—who is a model of duplicity," exclaimed Augusta, "Delvalley, away with the mask of sanctity—your visit was to Miss Smith; and yet you would pretend affection guided you hither. Delvalley, you are a hypocrite; and I am a wretch, deserted by principle, and almost bereft of reason:—we know each other."

"Faith, Augusta," replied Delvalley, "you are in the right, and all I wonder at, is, that we never were so explicit be-

fore; but let me beg of you to return to London; your house is not yet sold, and I can put a stop to the ill-judged proceeding. If you have any thing to propose relative to Fitzmaurice (who is, I conceive, at the bottom of all this extravagant rage) let me into the secret, take me as your counsel, and depend on my best advice and assistance."

Augusta embraced her brother, and unfolded her plan of ruining Selina in the opinion of the world; for this purpose she demanded his aid. Delvalley hesitated, and seemed rather unwilling to engage in the business. He said, that as a considerable living was vacant, he had applied for it; should an act of duplicity stigmatize his character, it might interfere between him and promotion, but bade her wait till he had secured the living, and then he cared not what he did.

Augusta treated him with the contempt he merited; he replied to her invectives with great *sang froid*, but said, that if she chose

chose to marry Ainslie, he had no doubt but, to oblige her, the Captain would ruin Selina in the opinion of the world, and blow Edward's brains out.

"Is Ainslie, at Bath?" demanded Augusta.

The answer was affirmative.

"Let him then," said she, "know that I am here, I must, I will be revenged."

Delvalley, secure of five thousand pounds, which he had been promised on the marriage day, joyfully executed the commission; he brought Ainslie to the lodgings, and bade him secure his prize, ere she changed her mind.

Augusta resolved in her mind various schemes of vengeance; those once accomplished, she determined to quit a world she abhorred.

Ainslie appeared before her. While the tumult of passion heaved her bosom, all idea of marriage she peremptorily rejected;—her hand, she said, once refused,

should never be held out to another;—her heart once trampled on, was proof to the feelings of love.

Ainslie, with all the art he was master of, tried in vain to shake her resolution. Her words were, “Revenge me, and possess the wealth I despise.”

The Captain was not displeased at her continual repetition of these words: assuming a gay air, he cried:—“Well, Madam, I desist from an unavailing suit; unhappy as I must be at your fixt resolution: I will be with you this evening;—you *shall* be revenged—we will talk the affair over again at piquet.”

Again did Augusta feel degraded—but a few weeks before Ainslie would have approached her with reverence and awe; he now shewed an unbecoming familiarity:—Ah, thought Augusta, my mind was then pure, and virtue will compel the admiration even of the worthless.

Ainslie, true to his appointment, called early in the evening; the game at piquet terminated

nated in his receiving a large sum of money; and having communicated a dark plot to Augusta, he retired to put his hellish scheme in execution.

It may readily be supposed, that Ainslie kept *his party at piquet* a secret from Delvalley; he only mentioned, that he found his sister's scruples insurmountable, and was obliged to decline the alliance. Delvalley was furious; all the rhetoric he was master of, was employed to encourage the Captain to continue his addresses; but Ainslie had a prospect of the fortune of Augusta—for her person he cared not; to his brutal mind, the haunts of infamy could furnish a more inviting object. In order to ensure his future access to the furious woman, he put all his schemes in execution.

His footman, a smart young fellow, easily got acquainted with the girl at Mrs. Beddome's, and she was prevailed upon, by a promise of marriage, and five hundred pounds, to give some letters, forged by

Ainslie, into the hands of her mistress, pretending she had found them on the stairs. Some notes, written by Edward and Selina, were in the possession of Augusta, and she delivered them to Ainslie, who was an adept at writing any hand but his own. How far his plan was successful, has already been detailed. Augusta was transported with joy; Ainslie profited by a moment of maddening gratitude, and the guilty woman had nothing left her to bestow. But when the marriage of Selina was made public, all the horrors of despair agitated her bosom; she was tempted to rush into the midst of the festivity, and destroying her happy rival, put a period, at the same time, to her own tortures. She had sacrificed her fortune and her fame, and now cursed, with frantic blasphemies, the hour that gave birth to a wretch like her. Ainslie, with expressions of tenderness but augmented her miseries, and nothing could have withheld her from self-murder, but the
hope

hope of yet circumventing the plans of happiness proposed by the newly-married pair.

She now returned to Sackville-street, but immured herself in her chamber, loathing life, and abhorring society.

CHAP. V.

EDWARD had passed a fortnight with his Selina in London, and now proposed visiting Cornwall. Mrs. Beddome was still outrageous, nor would she be convinced of her niece's innocence. Selina was concerned for the prejudices of a woman, in every other respect so amiable; but promised herself much delight in the western excursion, which was prevented by Edward's receiving a letter from his worthy relative:

"To Mr. Edward Fitzmaurice.

"Nephew Edward,

"The Holy Scriptures recommend patience to man, as a remedy for the evils of this life. Now, as your friend in the spirit, and your aunt in the flesh, I would recommend you to apply this remedy to your inward soul, as perhaps it may be put to the
fiery

fiery furnace of anger at what I am about to pour into your outward ears.

“ I have, by the internal warnings of the spirit, and the persuasions of the Reverend Mr. Tone, been induced to enter into the holy estate of matrimony, and have taken that worthy pastor as my spiritual guide, and husband of my bosom. Though young in years (being not yet three-and-twenty) he is old in wisdom and in good works. He, therefore, as my lord and master, commands me to say, that, as he means to reside in London, you must quit the house in Piccadilly; and, as you may be straightened for money, he allows me to send you fifty pounds, which is all he can do for you, as his family is numerous. His mother, grandmother, three sisters, and two little brothers, are on their way to the mansion in London: your apartments will be wanted.

“ I did not imagine, Nephew, that I should have ever married again, but your bad conduct forced me to seek a protector. Mr. Pobjoy has been with me, and has made
known

known your iniquities: fie upon it, I say; put a wicked reprobate of a girl on a footing with your sister Anastatia, who never did any thing wrong in her life! Want to make her again one of the family! and then to behave riotously, only because your brother-in-law gently remonstrated on the impropriety of the thing! My flesh quivers to think of it! The world will soon be at an end! Such indecencies can never be tolerated! Beelzebub beats a march, and all the nations of the earth fall into a quick step!——I am called away in a hurry to meeting.

Your aunt in the flesh,

Deborah Tone."

Adieu to Edward's hopes of happiness—he cursed the infatuation of methodism, and in his heart railed at his aunt for a superannuated old Beldame, whose vanity not even age could abate. How to communicate these tidings to his amiable wife he knew not; her distress would now be greater

greater than any she had yet experienced. By the order of Mrs. Rigby, his marriage had been celebrated with the greatest splendour: perhaps she would not even pay the expences. He did not possess quite three hundred pounds, and he knew the demands upon him to exceed twice that sum. With a heavy heart did Edward quit the house to seek a lodging; he was not long in the search: he took a small first floor at a moderate rent, and returned to Piccadilly to prepare his unsuspecting wife for a removal.

He was met in the hall by Selina, who, running into his arms, cried, "Oh! now I shall be safe!"

Edward, greatly surprised, enquired her meaning.

Selina, panting for breath, said, that a hackney coach had stopped at the door, and shortly after two women and five children entered the drawing-room: they came, they said, from a Mrs. Tone, and were to be considered as heads of the house. Selina added,

added, that the servants, who were in great confusion, were assembled in the butler's parlor; and, knowing his knock, she had herself opened the door.

Edward clearly comprehended the cause of this tumult; he soothed his timid wife, and hastily ascended to the drawing-room.

Here he beheld a spectacle which, at any other time, would have excited his risibility: a woman, upwards of seventy, stood in the middle of the room; by her side was an elderly matron, three young women, and two little boys (who, with dirty fingers, were playing with the silk curtain tassels, and singing as loud as they could bawl) completed the group. The abrupt entrance of Edward disconcerted the pious set, who were screaming—"The Lord my pasture shall prepare——."

"Pray, youth," cried the old woman, "is there any thing eatable in this house? For we are all hungry, after long wandering in a foreign land."

Edward begged to know, by what right
they

they intruded; and added, that if they could not give a satisfactory answer, he should call the servants to conduct them into the street.

“Here’s language to the elect!” exclaimed the old woman: “but, youth, let me tell you, that my grandson Tone governs his wife, and I govern my grandson Tone. You are, doubtless, the graceless nephew of your pious and long-suffering aunt, Deborah Tone, late Deborah Rigby, of excellent repute and sweet favour among the elect. Join our holy songs, and order a repast to be made ready: let our apartments be prepared; and let —.”

More would she have said, but Edward was out of hearing: enraged that a hypocritical set should thus usurp his rights, he begged Selina to prepare for quitting the house; resolved that no after repentance should induce him to pardon his vain and credulous relative.

The servants were now assembled in the hall: the butler shewed Edward a letter
- from

from Mrs Tone, requiring every attention to be paid to her dear kinsfolk. By the date it appeared that some accident had retarded the letter; and thus the holy society came unexpectedly to their new residence. "I thought," said the butler, "I was transmogrified with wonder! The old gentlewoman, that looks so like an ale wife, brought all the young varmint with her in the coach; she met me here, and bade me praise the Lord. I asked her what for; and she told me, that, as she was very dry, she would have a tankard of brown stout, with sugar and nutmeg: then, before I could say Jack Robinson, they popped up stairs, and fell singing and squalling like so many cats in a gutter. I was minded at first to send for a constable, for they looked so tag, rag, and bobtailish, that I thought they could be no relations of Madam's: but this letter, that I got about two hours ago, told me how matters stood: so I thought I'd wait till I saw your Honour, and if your Honour

Honour pleases I'll trundle 'em all into the street."

Edward begged the honest man not to give himself any trouble on his account, and ordered a hackney-coach to be called, as he was resolved not to use his aunt's equipage.

The servants no sooner understood that he meditated a departure, than they crouded round him and his trembling wife; they vowed that their mistress was turned crazy, and that they would serve her and her new set no longer. The butler swore, that when any of the straight-haired gentlemen in iron grey (who were always abusing the bishops and the government) used to frequent the house, he was constantly missing his silver spoons, and a salt-seller or so—they might be parsons for all he knew, but they looked more like journeymen shoe-makers or bankrupt tailors—and indeed he had heard that one of them was formerly a cobbler in White-chapel. But now, added he, when the
house

house was once cleared of such shabberoons, it is a burning shame to send a parcel of scarecrows of the same kidney.

The servants joined in opinion with the spokesman, and unanimously requested Edward to keep them, and let the gentry above sing till their throats ached.

Edward was affected at this instance of regard: he, however, declined the offer, conscious that he must now descend from a sphere of life to which he had long been accustomed.

Had he alone been concerned, his philosophy would have run no risk of being shaken; but his heart sunk, and his eyes filled with tears, when he contemplated his innocent wife; she divined the cause of his sorrow, and was no sooner conveyed to her humble lodging, than she cheerfully busied herself in putting every thing in order; she then took him by the hand, and with a smile, beaming with the sweetest benignity, exclaimed:—"Grieve not, dear Fitzmaurice, on my account, for I know
you

you bestow not a thought on yourself; can you think so meanly of me, as to imagine that a change of fortune will cause me a sigh; poverty and I have been long known to each other: and, believe me, the horrors of the phantom recede before the energies of a patient mind; dwell not on the affluence we have lost, but think of the happiness yet in store for us: your own prudence will point out the path you will pursue; my hands shall furnish their weak tribute; contented, because virtuous, our days will be crowned by self-approbation; the smile of affection shall cheer our toil: I am happy, yes, my love, very, very happy." She threw her arms around him, and sobbed in his bosom; no selfish idea stained the purity of her mind, and the tears which she could not restrain flowed for her husband.

The first burst of feeling having subsided, Selina felt a calm, which innocence alone can bestow; her cheerful resignation, communi-

communicated its influence to the mind of Edward ; his fancy teemed with images of futurity, and he resolved no longer to trust to the fallacious promises of another, but be ever self dependant.

Agitated by the events of the day, Selina found rest a stranger to her eyelids; she, however, pretended to sleep lest Edward might suspect that her feelings preyed too heavily upon her; the neighbouring clocks proclaimed the lapse of each melancholy hour, and it was not till broad daylight that Selina sunk into a feverish slumber.

Edward rose early—his rest had been broken by fearful visions; he would not disturb Selina, hoping that the perturbation of his spirits would subside by the time she joined him.

While he sadly ruminated on his distressing circumstances, the servant of the house opened the door, and two men entering the room, arrested him for the sum of six hundred pounds.

Looking

Looking at the writ, Edward, with sorrow, allowed the validity of the claim, (which was for part of the expences of his marriage) and intreated the men to allow him to break the matter by degrees to his wife. The fellows, who had more humanity than generally falls to the lot of a sheriff's officer, begged him to take his own time, but said that they must be in the next room.

Edward, with an aking heart, entered the bed-chamber: he softly drew back the curtain; Selina slept; her head reclined upon her arm, and her breath was short, and interrupted. Edward gazed on her with agony indescribable. Oh my wife! thought he, Oh my Selina! you sleep in pain—perhaps dreadful images haunt your fancy!—why should I awake thee from ideal to substantial woe?—excellent creature!—how will thy meek spirit bear up against the tide of unexpected misery?

“Fitzmaurice!

"Fitzmaurice ! dear Fitzmaurice !" murmured Selina, (for her dreams presented the form of her husband).

Edward bent over her in silent anguish, and a tear, which he sought not to restrain, (as he was unconscious that it flowed) fell upon the cheek of his amiable wife. Selina started, and awaked—"Ha !" cried she, with an affectionate smile, "you find me an idle sluggard. I must learn to rise early, that I may enjoy a greater portion of happiness; for till I convince you that I am capable of chearful industry, I shall fancy myself unworthy of your generous protection."

Edward clasped her to his bosom—his grief, which but augmented by the efforts he made to restrain it, now burst forth—she tenderly soothed his trouble, and with difficulty he was brought to acknowledge his situation. Selina's promptitude of mind taught her how to act in this emergency—she read the soul of Edward—she was impressed with an idea of the miseries

to

to which an union with her had been conducive, yet she knew, that her husband felt for her sake alone. She begged time to give what orders he might judge proper, and when he left the room, dressed herself, and was soon by his side.

Edward had ordered a small trunk, containing the necessary articles of wearing apparel—"You, my love," cried he! while he fondly prest her hand "will still retain these lodgings, do not ask to accompany me now:—in a few days I shall hope to see you." Selma looked earnestly in his face—a timid reproof trembled on her tongue. "You relieved me from a prison," said she, "shall I abandon you to the horrors of one? If you think I should suffer less from a temporary parting, I will obey you; but believe me," (the tears streamed down her cheeks) "that with you all situations are equal, and if by my affectionate assiduity, you will allow me to assert myself a wife indeed, I shall feel myself (and not before) worthy of the title.

"Exalted woman!" cried the enraptured

tured Edward! "follow the dictates of your pure heart!—let libertines tread the path of illicit love; let the cynic rail at the arts of your sex; I despise, I ever despised, the ideas of prejudice; true happiness, paradoxical as it may appear, is independant of the smiles or frowns of fortune; for even now, when the storm of adversity bursts on my head, a beam of celestial comfort glads my heart."

Edward was then, after the proper formalities, removed to the king's-bench, and Selina procured a small lodging in its vicinity.

Yet even in this abode of wretchedness, did the mind of the unfortunate fair find some alleviations, by the dulcet sounds of an *Æolian* harp, which was placed in the windows of a prisoner: Edward listened attentively, and Selina, inspired by its melody, wrote the following lines:

On the Æolian Harp.

On yonder harp, what various strings abound,
Yet all in concord yield seraphic sound!
In vain we look, such harmony to find,
Among the jarring discord of mankind.
If to our hearts such sympathy were given,
The union soon would make of earth a heaven.

* I was favored with these lines by the Rev. Charles Hill, of Intow, Devon.

CHAP. VI.

A Waterman.

THOUGH Edward felt that the designs of an enthusiastic sect had ruined him with his aunt, he was far from suspecting that a deeper plan had been agitated against him. This was no other than the offspring of the brains of Mr. Pobjoy, who let slip no opportunity of promoting the interest of his family, because his own was concerned in it. Athacombe was but thirty miles from the village of Rockbourne; and Pobjoy, after some deliberation, determined to ask pardon of Edward for his unkind reception of him; for the fame of Mrs. Rigby's fortune had reached into Devonshire, and the little apothecary thought that his children had a right to a scramble for the loaves and fishes.

Having put on a fine glossy black coat and a pair of new footed worsted stockings, he took his eldest born, Neddy, on the sad-

dle before him, hoping to reach Mrs. Rigby's before night.

When he arrived in sight of the beautiful mansion he was struck with awe; for, though thirty miles in the country is considered as a mere morning's ride, Mr. Pobjoy had never before been ten miles from Rockbourne.

Mrs. Rigby was not in a most complacent state of mind. Mr. Tone, intent on the duties of the table, had been remiss in courting her from Solomon's song; and the angry fair had half promised to herself never to be his. Mr. Pobjoy gave a stiff jerk off his head and the skirts of his coat; this he intended as a bow, while Neddy, sucking the thumb of his right hand, and scratching his head by the help of the other, seemed to take very little notice of what was going forward.

After announcing his name and occupation, Mr. Pobjoy hoped that his brother-in-law was well. Mrs. Rigby, in answer to his long oration, replied, "that she received all mankind as spiritual brethren, not at

all

all caring for consanguinity; that he was welcome to stay till the next morning at her house, because charity forbade her to drive the stranger from the gate;" and concluded by observing, "that as for Edward Fitzmaurice, she did not know how to act on his account, or what she could do for him, as she should in all probability (here she affected a blush) again enter into the holy wedded state."

Pobjoy was almost overwhelmed with astonishment; he had, however, sense enough to see that any objection on his part would only precipitate the match; and he recollected a saying, which he sometimes, when out of temper, made use of to his mother-in-law, viz. when an old woman is resolved to go to the devil, the devil himself cannot hinder her. Rendered cautious by this elegant reflection, the Son of Physic clothed his face in smiles, approved her choice, though he had never seen its object, and wished her much joy of her happy prospects.

Edward was no longer a favourite with his aunt. This, Pobjoy wished to turn to his own advantage. He declared, that he only came to remonstrate with the youth who had grossly insulted him in his own house, and on his refusal of an apology, to lay his bad conduct before his excellent protectress. Mrs. Rigby, in a rage, vowed never to see her nephew more; she was highly delighted at finding an excuse (however weak) to abandon him; and the unexpected arrival of the apothecary furnished her with one. She now piously anathematized the horrid misconduct of insulting a brother-in-law, though she had but a minute before disclaimed the storge of consanguinity.

Mr. Pobjoy, in consequence of having afforded her this pretence, became a great favourite; and in less than a month he and his whole family were comfortably settled at Athacombe, much to the discomfiture of the pious Mr. Tone, who urged in vain that this was being righteous over much.

But

But Mrs. Tone was peremptory; though she consented to give up Edward as her heir, she had too much regard for the opinion of the world to abandon the whole family. Mr. Pobjoy's practice, as an apothecary, was not great; indeed, he only followed the profession, because it gave him a consequence in the village, and gratified his insatiable thirst for anecdote. His fortune, which he inherited from his father, an industrious shoemaker, was secured in the funds; though not large, it was fully sufficient to live upon with comfort, but an increasing family put the poor doctor to his wits end. His practice was confined to a few rustics at Rockbourne; a situation in a large town was the height of Pobjoy's ambition. This, by Mrs. Rigby's influence, he obtained, for while she deputed him to receive her rents as steward, she recommended him to her acquaintance as a physician. Mr. Tone, who had a call by the spirit from felling herrings, to thunder from a pulpit, and sometimes from a beer barrel, now be-

gan to throw off the mask. Secure of the widow, he looked down upon the apothecary; and after assuring him that he should exact a severe account of his stewardship on his return, carried his ancient bride to London.

Mr. and Mrs. Pobjoy were almost annihilated by this cavalier behaviour. Prudence however came to their aid, but unfortunately left principle behind. Pobjoy was a great stickler for church and king; he always drank the toast after dinner:—but affairs were now altered; he began to have qualms of conscience; his wife talked of justification by faith alone. Mrs. Fitzmaurice exclaimed against lawn sleeves, and the children were taught to run about the house, asking every body what they should do to be saved.

This behaviour greatly recommended them to Mrs. Tone; her piety now grew outrageous, and some of her friends actually thought her a proper object of confinement; an idea her husband was not willing to discourage.

While

While these machinations were carrying on, Edward was consigned to the horrors of a prison. He wrote a letter to Mrs. Tone, evincing the calm contempt her conduct inspired, and demanded his liberty at her hands, not as a favour, but as a right. To this letter he received no answer, for it did not reach the hands of his aunt; Mr. Tone, like a careful husband, opened all his wife's letters; and as this was not calculated to dulcify her temper, he committed it to the flames.

All Edward's little remaining property was in the hands of a banker in the city. An immediate supply was necessary, and Selina offered to bear the draft. She put on her straw hat, and willing to spare every expence, walked towards the city, though her trembling limbs often reminded her of the necessity of a conveyance. When she came near Blackfriars-bridge, she beheld a crowd assembled; it approached her, and as she stood on the steps of a door to let it pass, she beheld the body of a gentleman,

which had just been taken from the water. The livid countenance struck her eye; the crowd passed on, and Selina had recourse to a smelling-bottle, to prevent her from fainting. A maid servant opened the door where she was standing, and civilly asked her to walk in: when seated in the parlour, after having swallowed some hartshorn drops, she began to recollect her scattered thoughts. Having thanked the girl for her humane attention, she was about to withdraw, when two ladies, apparently mother and daughter, entered the room. With the most engaging kindness, they begged her to be seated; she complied, and after a few minutes conversation, again arose to depart, when her eyes meeting a portrait opposite to her, she involuntarily shrieked.

Alarmed at her emotion, Mrs. Hargreaves (the lady of the house) hastened to her assistance. "You are not yet sufficiently recovered, Madam," said she; "let me beg you to rest a little longer."

"'Tis nothing, Madam," said Selina, faintly;

faintly; "but as I looked at that portrait, I——"

"Do you know the gentleman? he is an intimate friend of ours—a very particular friend."

"It is --- it is --- I believe --- I think --- Mr. Delvalley."

"It is, Madam," said Mrs. Hargreaves, coolly. "Are you acquainted with the gentleman? he is an estimable character."

"How little," exclaimed Selina with indignation, "do you know him: under the mask of probity, he conceals the blackest of hearts. At this moment, not far from this spot, a wretched woman languishes in seclusion from the world, a victim of his arts."

"I cannot think," said Miss Hargreaves, blushing, that Mr. Delvalley——"

"Name him not, name him not," exclaimed Selina in an agony. "Let the injured Miss Fitzmaurice declare in what detestation such a character should be held!"

Selina could not express more, yet her

anger against the seducer of innocence was heightened by a strong suspicion that Delvalley and Augusta were instrumental in the forgery against her fame.

At the name of Fitzmaurice, Mrs. Hargreaves startled. She sternly enquired if Selina was the wife of a person so called?

“ My name is Fitzmaurice,” said Selina, wondering. The countenance of Mrs. Hargreaves lowered with anger, while that of the daughter beamed with delight. At length the elder lady rising, said, “ I now see, Madam, that your coming was not quite accidental; from your appearance, young woman, I should not have thought you capable of artful intrigue: however, you may wish, Mrs. Fitzmaurice, to prejudice me against a worthy character; believe me, your arts are vain. I know you, Mrs. Fitzmaurice, I know you, and am sorry that the errors of your early life are not expiated by a due sense of your enormities. I beg, madam, that you will instantly quit my house, and inform your husband,

husband, that if lenity did not predominate in the heart he ungratefully flanders, a court of justice would take cognizance of his villainies."

A chariot then drove to the door, and the two ladies getting into it, drove away for a morning's ride.

Selina, stupified with astonishment, calmly left the house. She observed not the passing crowd, but mechanically walked towards the city. Her ideas were not sufficiently distinct to form a connected chain; she felt she was miserable, yet such was the suddenness of the blow, that she could scarce tell whence her misery arose. When arrived at the banker's, she was informed that the house had stopt payment; that the elder partner had shot himself, and the younger fled his country.

Selina felt no additional shock; she returned in a state of calm despondence, nor did any idea break the monotony of her sorrows till she reached the bridge. Selina startled—Here, thought she, but two hours ago

ago did I behold a corpse borne by me—poor, poor sufferer! thy misery is at an end! what should deter me from following thy example? Wretched being that I am! let me summon my resolution: oh, my beloved Fitzmaurice, I will expiate, by a voluntary death, my faults in regard to you; by me were you ruined; I cannot bear your soothing tenderness, and I will die.”

“A boat, Ma’am! a boat, your ladyship!” vociferated the watermen. Selina was assisted down the steps, and being asked, whither she meant to go? answered, “Yes.”

“Where would your ladyship like to be taken?”

“Yes,” replied Selina, pensively.

“Would you like to go to Greenwich, Madam?”

“Yes.”

The boatman perceived that something was wrong; he, however, took his oars, and guessing her intention (instances of a similar nature having fallen under his observation)

servation) he determined to watch her motions.

Selina leaned her head upon her hand; her pale cheek and tearless haggard eye betrayed the acuteness of her misery: the man narrowly watched her, fearing every moment she would leap from the boat.

"Special warm weather, Madam," said he, "for the time of the year."

Selina made no answer.

"It's mortal hot, Ma'am, isn't?"

No answer.

"My wife," continued the waterman, "will wonder at my good luck in having such a fare."

"You have a wife?" said Selina earnestly.

"Yes, Ma'am, that I have, and three as fine children as ever breathed God's air, though I say it, that should not say it. I shall have another in a month or so."

"And did not your wife," said Selina (whose brain began to wander), "involve you in every difficulty, cause you to contract

tract debts on her account, throw you into a prison, and reduce you to misery?"

"She! Lord bless your ladyship, no. I was in prison, it is true, and I cannot think how you should have heard it; but mayhap you live hereabouts. My wife, bless her soul, was not the cause of it; no more was I for the matter of that, for an honest man is sometimes hard run in this world. As for Sally, so far from leaving me in my distress, she used to sit and cry for whole hours together, though she worked hard at making cabbage nets and pincushions all the time. It used to cheer my poor heart, to hear her talk so kindly to me: I was very bad with a fever, and if I had not had somebody to be good to me, I must have made a die of it."

"Fitzmaurice! Fitzmaurice!" exclaimed Selina.

The boatman rowed on, but narrowly observed his passenger.

Selina burst into tears. Recollection returned: she threw herself on her knees in the boat.

"Almighty

"Almighty Providence!" exclaimed she, "yes, I will live for my husband: pardon, gracious heaven, the dictates of despair; blot from my soul the guilt with which it was about to be contaminated, but by gracious interference."

"Shall I row back, Madam?" said the waterman!

"Yes, row back quickly, my good friend."

Selina arrived at the stairs; she put a guinea, in the hurry of her feelings, into the hand of the waterman. He called after her to give the change; but the celerity of her step precluded pursuit, and the man dared not leave his boat.

On her return to the prison, she softly opened the door; her husband was reading aloud; she was concealed by a curtain, drawn across the room to exclude the wind, and listened attentively.

The sun with splendour decks the placid wave,

And the glad fisher trims his little sail;

With gentle influence th' auspicious gale

Courts him th' inconstant element to brave.

Ah,

Al, heedless man ! a sudden storm appals

His hurried sense—around the waters roar—

Despair his energy of mind enthrals,

And the sun sinks, for him to rise no more.

So in youth's morn, a beauteous prospect rose,

By fancy fashion'd, and by hope retain'd ;

But treach'ry unforeseen my youth hath stain'd,

And disappointment must my visions close.

Cease, cease my heart, to breathe the wish unfeign'd,

That fate's o'erwhelming tide soon terminate thy woes.

Selina wept. Her sobs were audible. Edward startled, and approached her: he was evidently indisposed, yet endeavoured to speak with cheerfulness; and when Selina, with a breaking heart, informed him of the extent of his misfortune, he betrayed no particular emotion. But his face belied his heart; there misery had sole dominion! he beheld his beloved wife a prey to poverty; and himself unable to contribute to her support!

“Leave me for a while, Selina,” cried he, faintly; “we have yet resources; but this news has much discomposed me. Retire, my love; to-morrow I will see you.”

Selina

Selina obeyed. Fitzmaurice fondly embraced her, and she quitted the prison.

Left alone, the unhappy man began to consider how to procure immediate relief. To his aunt he had applied, but had received no answer. Helen was unable, and Anastatia, perhaps, unwilling to assist him; besides, he much doubted if he could, consistent with his notions of honour, claim relief from that quarter, as he had appeared to drop all connection with his family. His mother was not rich; yet, perhaps, a remaining tenderness might induce her to come forward in his behalf; her love for her grandchildren might not have extinguished her affection for an only son. Fitzmaurice, therefore, with a trembling hand, wrote a letter expressive of his misery, and retiring to his bed found his mental anguish encreased by the horrors of a burning fever.

CHAP. VII.

A Revolution.

At eight o'clock in the morning, Selina arose from a slumber, more tranquil than she could have hoped, from the disturbed state of her mind. Her dreams had presented images of joy; on waking, she sighed at the recollection of a wandering fancy! "Ah," thought she, "are my pleasures always to be ideal?"—With a hasty step, she sought the prison gate, and when she entered the wretched apartment of her husband, her eyes were struck by the appearance of a man sitting by the bedside. She would have retired, but the man calling after her, declared he was glad she was come, for the gentleman had been very obstreperous.—"What!" exclaimed Selina, with horror.

"He was mortal bad all night, returned
the

the man; so Jim that brings the beer told me on't, and I came and sat by him; at first, he took me by the hand, and called me his dear Selina; then he desired me to sing him the sweet song he loved so much. Now my name is Jacob Partridge, and I sing as sweet as a sow in a saw pit; so I fancied he was a little gone in the upper story, and bid him be quiet and go to sleep; but he began to talk about old women, and the new Jerusalem, and a sister, and five children, and an unfeeling mother, and an old withered man he knew nothing at all about, and the like of that, so I bid him——but law, Ma'am, don't look so very piteous!—master will get well by-and-bye.

Selina's horror was too great for utterance; she gazed with a look of vacancy, on the enflamed features of her husband! his lips were swollen and black; his eyes half opened and fixed, and his breath was drawn with effort. She seated herself on the bed, nor was it till a burst of tears relieved her heart, that she was enabled to give

give any directions; at length she gathered courage, sufficient to order a physician to be called. A shabby-looking man made his appearance: he shook his head, wished he had been sent for sooner, and recommended a copious bleeding.

Selina requested to know where she should send to him, if the patient grew worse? and learned that the physician was himself a prisoner. Unwilling to offend, yet determined to procure better advice, Selina proposed a consultation. The doctor, angry that his skill should be called in question, left the room, muttering, that she must first consult her purse.

A new horror now presented itself to the harrassed mind of Selina. On examining the purse of her unfortunate husband, seven guineas and some silver were its contents. This then was their all, in a place where the calls for money are diurnal. Edward lay in a state of insensibility; his eyes were fixed: he spoke not, nor could the tears or caresses of his affectionate wife, call him from this state of living death.

Three long weeks passed away; and Selina, no longer able to pay the small sum requisite to buy the absence of the man who was a sharer of her husband's small apartment, had the misery of beholding a mean looking fellow, with a wife and two small children, take up their abode in the same room. Selina had quitted her lodgings, and now remained in the prison. While a prisoner herself, her misery was great; but now with a husband in a dying state, and coarse wretches for companions, nothing but her affection for Edward, could have preserved her from desperation.

The poor people were, however, as civil as their nature would allow them: they bade her be comforted, and easy; but the man would smoke, and the woman went drunk to bed four nights in the week; one of the children had the hooping-cough, and the parents used to quarrel, and sometimes fight about whose turn it was to get up to its assistance.

One morning, when these noisy companions

nions were absent; Selina approached her dying husband: his eyes were more than usually dim; she startled, and felt his pulse; as she raised his hand, Edward, in a feeble voice, articulated, "My Selina!"

Selina, though her heart beat with ecstasy, had the prudence to restrain her transports.

"Do you know me, Edward?"—He pointed to a jug of water, which stood near the fire-side; she, with trembling hands, brought it; he approached his lips to it, and after a long draught, again sunk on his pillow.—"Do you know me, Fitzmaurice?" said Selina, trembling yet more.

"Know you! my heart's best treasure!" faintly replied Edward; "my guardian angel! I do not remember what has lately passed, but feverish dreams have presented your form to my sight."

"Thanks be to heaven!" exclaimed Selina; "my husband! my Edward will live!"—She threw herself on her knees, by the bedside.

“ Ah no !” replied Edward ; “ I feel that death has laid his hand upon me ; I am dying, my Selina ! this temporary ease but preludes the end of my mortal career ; for myself, I feel no pang, but “ oh, deserving woman, what shall be your fate ?”

“ Talk not thus, not thus—I beseech you, Edward ; you will not die ; you are better—you will live many years—yes we shall be happy many, many years ! Oh, I am too wretched ! such misery as mine—— Selina stopped—she feared to augment her husband’s malady ; she looked steadfastly at him ; he was unable to force a word, his bosom heaved convulsively ; his throat rattled, his eyes were immoveably fixed. Selina too well knew these to be the symptoms of approaching dissolution ; she uttered an agonizing shriek, and fainted on the body of her expiring husband.

When sensation returned, Selina found herself supported by an aged man, whose tears slowly coursing down his venerable cheeks, testified the interest he took in the

scene before him—a tall, elegant female sat by the bed-side, and held the hand of Edward, whose languid frame was supported by two gentlemen.

“My brother! my brother!” cried the lady. “Do you not know me? Do you not know your Helen, your poor Helen, who but for you had been a slave to vice and penury? Speak, for Heaven’s sake!—Oh, my Edward! Speak to your Helen!”

The old gentleman having seated Selina on the only chair in the room, approached the foot of the bed—“Poor victim of the world’s folly, and my capricious neglect!” exclaimed he: “Should it be the will of Heaven to restore thee, it shall be my care to place thee beyond the power of fortune.—Be comforted, Madam,” turning to Selina) “prepare to quit this abode of misery: the debts are discharged——.”

Selina gazed vacantly on him. She uttered a few incoherent sentences; her brain could bear no more. Her looks were frenzied; her frame was convulsed.

“Oh,

“ Oh, unfortunate pair !” exclaimed the old man. Then turning to the gentlemen who supported Edward, he added, “ If Mr. Fitzmaurice can be removed, let him be brought to Harley-street.”

The physicians informed him, that the patient, though dangerously ill, could bear removal, and proffered their services to Selina, who in a short time grew more composed, and was escorted by the old gentleman to an elegant carriage, in which her husband was also carefully placed.—The coach proceeded at a foot pace, and Selina, who wept without intermission, when she arrived in Harley-street, found every elegant accommodation ; but no persuasion could prevail upon her to quit the apartment of her husband. A small tent-bed was provided, and she administered all his medicines herself.

Careful attendance, quiet, and the best advice, soon brought Edward to a state of convalescence, to the unspeakable rapture of his wife ; who now first proposed, that he should himself thank their benefactor.

Edward was supported to a couch: he awaited the coming of the beneficent stranger; and, to his surprise, Mr. Withers entered the room!

After cautioning Edward against any too great emotion, the old gentleman informed him, that he was about to lay aside all mystery: but, before he gave any explanation of his apparently inconsistent conduct, he had a letter to deliver, which was sent that morning from the prison:

“ Mr. Edward Fitzmaurice,
a prisoner in the King’s Bench prison.

“ Brother-in-law,

“ My mother-in-law received your letter of the third ult. which was sent to us from Rockbourne to Athacombe, where we now reside. It is no wonder you are in trouble; nor have you a right to be exempt from the sorrows of this vale of tears.—I mentioned this to my mother-in-law; and told her, that the young men of this age are much given to backslidings and iniquity. She urged,

urged, that you had settled a large sum on her, and, upon her demise, on my children, and that her conscience bade her to send you a supply in your exigencies: but I thought fit to consult the Reverend Mr. Figgins, a preacher of the word, and a tinner, who has the direction of the consciences of this family of love. He advised, and sane was the advice, 'to let folly punish itself.' If you had not offended your good uncle, he would have left you all his treasure, to make pious souls right glad; but you were wilful, and ran your neck into the snare of perdition, even as a rat into a rat-trap. And for what? To comfort and abet in crime a monster of wickedness, whose cup overflowed with the abundance of abomination. My mother-in-law, therefore, put the five pounds (which she in her weakness meant to send you) again in her pocket: we have many calls for money, and the righteous must never want.—I hope this kindness on our part, of afflicting your body for the good of your soul, will be gratefully re-

membered by you ; and you may be assured of the prayers of your loving brother-in-law,

Athacombe.

Nathaniel Pobjoy."

Edward gave this letter into the hands of Withers, who perused it with looks divided between laughter and contempt. "I am glad," said he "that the mercenary hypocrite has no subterfuge, when you shew yourself independent : but that a mother should act thus, I own grieves me. I did not think so hardly of human nature."

"You the advocate of human nature!" exclaimed Edward ; "you, Mr. Withers! the general tenor of whose conduct ——."

"It was an honest deception, Edward ; it was meant to save you ! I despise the misanthropic character : the conduct of that man, who can villify his fellow creatures, demonstrates that his heart is corrupt, or that he has associated with the worthless alone. Vice is, and will be, the inmate of our planet ; but virtue, though it must carefully

carefully be sought after, does not less exist. Listen to me, Edward; you have often expressed a desire to know my history; I will now satisfy your curiosity——.”

Selina begged him, before he proceeded, to inform her, who the lady was, whose great attention to her brother was so remarkable in the prison.

Withers informed her, “that she was the sister of her husband.—Helen,” said he, again addressing himself to Edward, “is, at length, restored to society: in the Magdalen, her behaviour was exemplary. I acquainted my friend, the Bishop of——, with her story; and he, with that benignity and greatness of mind, for which he is distinguished, recommended her to be about the person of his lady: the elegance and retiring modesty of your sister, endeared her to her kind mistress, and she is now her favoured companion and friend. I amused her by a feigned tale, and gave her to understand, that you were with your aunt in Cornwall. By my desire, she has not visited you during
F 4 your

your abode in this house, for I deemed all emotion prejudicial to your recovery. Hear now *my* history—my name is Emanuel Fitzmaurice, and ——.”

“How!” exclaimed Edward and Selina, in a breath.

“Yes, I am your unfortunate father’s elder brother; repress your eagerness: I will explain every thing.”

CHAP. VIII.

The History of Fitzmaurice, senior.

“OF my family I know little. My grandfather's name was Clarke: he began the world by keeping a book-stall. Industry and honesty were his chief resources; they did not fail him: he raised himself to a large shop, and left a fortune of twelve thousand pounds to an only son. My father, having this decent capital, continued the business, and married a lady whose family could not endure the vile name of Clarke: this objection was, however, soon removed; for by putting himself to some expence, he changed his name to that of his wife's family, and became a Fitzmaurice.

“Fortune continued favourable: my father's gains encreased. I was born two years subsequent to the marriage, and your

father was my junior by a twelvemonth. My brother was placed in the counting house of an eminent merchant; but my mother's family insisted that I, as the eldest born, should have the education of a gentleman; that is, pass my time in the miserable occupation of doing nothing.

"I was sent, therefore, to college, where I lost the little learning I had acquired at school, but gained a vast knowledge of the world; for I drank, gamed, and intrigued; was at the head of riots, and, in short, the most noted debauchée of Oriel. Many complaints were made to my father of my misconduct; many were his letters of remonstrance: I answered them by demands for money, and many of my mother's family were weak enough to accede to my extortions.

"At length my father died; and my mother survived him but a week! Death had, of late, been much an intruder: the 'frequent hearses besieged our gates,' and many

many Fitzmaurices were borne to the last receptacle of pride, the family vault.

“ My brother was a diligent, thinking man; he resolved to continue in the line chalked out for him. I ridiculed his narrow ideas; said, they became his fortune, which was six thousand pounds; and exulted in possessing five times that sum. I would not quit the university: habit had rendered it familiar to me. Here I found companions, whose pursuits were congenial to my own. My large fortune was the theme of their envy. I knew it. I entered into every expensive plan; and did not perceive, till after a length of time, that a large part of my newly-acquired property had found its way to the purse of my companions. Among all my faults, ungenerous suspicion never had a place: I cursed the ill-run of a die, but there my rage found its limit. Among the youths of Oriel was a Mr. —; he was a *bore*, according to the opinion of his fellow collegians; but if a man of probity had depicted him, he would

have been deemed affable, unaffected, devout, learned, and diligent. To this man I bore the most inveterate hatred: his excellent conduct seemed to reproach my excesses. I had no ideas of the happiness of self-approbation; yet I could not endure that another should enjoy any degree of praise: I wished *alone* to enjoy the sweets of admiration; little thinking that the sentiments I excited were due to my vices and my wine parties. To humble Mr. —, was then my greatest wish. I sneered at him in the quadrangle; I ridiculed him to my companions: these were not slow to disparage a man of worth: I even (I blush at the recollection) attempted to blacken his character, by pretending to be privy to some actions of his, in which the rules of the university are most severe.

The students, or those so called, were, in my time, and perhaps now, seldom admitted to the private parties of the place. But some of my mother's family were settled at Oxford; and it was at the house of
a Mrs.

a Mrs. Ommaney I first met Amanda Sullivan.

“ This young lady was, in my eyes, a perfect beauty. Indeed her female friends allowed her to be very handsome. Her mind was, I believe, purity itself. She was about the age of seventeen. Her parents were opulent farmers in Devonshire ; and as I scrupled not to transgress the laws of truth, I often pleaded the illness of a near relation to excuse an absence from my studies : this time was spent at the house of the father of my enchantress ; who, divining my motives, often pressed me to make his house my own, when my academical avocations would permit.

“ Miss Sullivan was summoned to a relation, from whom she had great expectations. Her maiden aunt, Mrs. Sullivan, lived at Hampstead. I could no longer bear to be separated from the object of my love : I could not brook even the slight restraint of a college. I took my degrees (though I richly deserved expulsion) and flew

flew to London. Here I had daily opportunities of viewing my beloved Amanda. She was, in a short time, brought to confess her esteem for me. The marriage-day was fixed, but a slight cold, which she neglected, was attended by a fever: it increased; and on the day appointed to be the happiest of my life, the fair creature was borne a corpse to the church-yard of Hampstead.

Need I depict my feelings? they were those of a young man unused to disappointment. I raved; I accused Providence: but time brought reflection. I consoled myself for an irreparable loss; and, with all the self-sufficiency of youth, concluded, that an object equally beautiful, and more indebted to fortune, might fall to my share.

“I could not but pay a visit to the parents of Amanda: and it was in one of the most romantic spots in Devonshire that I composed those lines, which I some-time ago purposely let fall *, that you, Ed-

* Vide Vol. I.

ward, might not think me quite so misanthropic as I appeared. Oh let every heart guard itself against that baneful influence !— I cannot but repeat you some lines * which I wrote on revisiting the well-known scenes of Devon, when age had cooled my first impressions.

I.

Where the lucid waters stray,
Or in circling eddies play ;
Or where, light in misty foam,
O'er the fern-clad rock they fall,
At even tide I pensive roam,
And bid remembrance all the past recal.

II.

The knotted oak o'erhangs the wave,
The woodbine wreathes its form around
The forest's monarch—o'er the ground
(Ne'er yet to tyrant art a slave)
The strawb'ry spreads its scarlet hue,
And, gemm'd with Heaven's richest dew,
The violet bends beneath the tread,
Whilst o'er the pensive wanderer's head,
Oft does the nightingale † her broken strain renew.

III.

* These lines were written when I laboured under the pressure of ill health. By a very slight alteration I have adapted them to the feelings of a much older man.

† It has been asserted, that nightingales have never been heard in Devonshire. The author has, however, frequently listened to their melody in Lyne Way, not far from the celebrated valley of Stones, North Devon.

III.

No low'ring tempests intervene

To mar, O Devon ! thy enchanting plains !

With equal lustre glows the scene,

As fair the wave, as bright the green,

As free from art's destructive chains

As when with youth's enthusiastic fire

To fair Amanda's praise I tun'd the lyre,

And mourn'd a lover's pains.

IV.

Since Time's oblivious hand has cur'd

The sorrows of my youthful day,

Since all the pains that love endur'd,

Are chac'd like morning mists away,

Why finds the heart no pleasure here ?

These scenes were once to fancy dear !

What visionary spells impart

(Veiling Nature's richest hues)

Gloomy fanciet to the heart,

And, sullen, bid it thoughts of joy refuse ?

V.

Time, that cur'd my early pain,

Tears me from my youthful day,

And all the vivifying ray

Of youth, alas, I ne'er must see again !

Oh ye, whose pulse with health beats high,

Consider with benignant eye

The follies of your kind !

So shall your philanthropic soul,

When years shall silent onward roll,

Cherish the scene long past, hail what's to come behind !

“ Again

“Again I plunged into the gay or rather dissipated scenes of life. I assembled round me, the idle and profligate: the gaming table was not neglected. My fortune, in less than a year, was reduced to two thousand pounds; these, in a maddening fit of despair, I staked on the turn of a die; the die turned—I was ruined.

“I now began to perceive that I was shunned by my acquaintance; I knew that fortune was followed, and ingratitude very common; but I fondly hoped I should find an exemption from the general lot. My hopes deceived me; and to complete my misfortune, a woman, on whom I had lavished a great part of my property, deserted me, after having contrived a trivial and doubtless concerted dispute, and was soon after the professed mistress of a man (I cannot call him gentleman) to whom I had lost large sums. I was not so little known in the circles of fashion, as to fall unheeded; many pitied me, more laughed

laughed at me, though none wondered at my misfortunes.

“ I now saw the world in its most odious colours. My brother (whose attention to his mercantile concerns had raised him to great eminence) frequently proffered his assistance : this I haughtily refused. Misanthropy took possession of my mind. I loathed my species. My brother's offers I attributed to pride ; and, with a gloomy satisfaction, I reflected that I had yet sufficient to buy a pistol.

“ In meditations on suicide did my hours pass away. My resolution was almost taken, when a daily paper confirmed my wavering intentions. By this was I informed, that a young man had put a period to his existence, in a manner the most deliberate. I envied his magnanimity, as I falsely deemed it, and resolved no longer to delay myself immolation.

“ I must here observe, that I think the public prints are highly reprehensible for inserting

ing such paragraphs, without severely animadverting on the rashness of the act; for the impulses of desperation we daily hear of, may from their frequency lose a portion of their horror.

“ I prepared the weapon of death, and resolved to excel my predecessors in calmness. I wrote a letter, which I put in my pocket, to be found after my death, in which I detailed and justified my motives. My dress was particularly attended to; and, to put the finishing hand to my intrepidity, I went to a coffee-house, and entered into a conversation with some of my old acquaintance, who, as their circumstances resembled my own, did not shun me.

“ Here I made the panegyric of Rousseau, and publicly justified suicide.

“ A deep sigh attracted my notice. I looked to the place whence it proceeded, and beheld, my fellow collegian Mr. ——. By his dress, it appeared that he had taken orders. Willing to mortify him, I approached and enquired after his health. His answer

swer was civil, but coolly distant. I asked his opinion of suicide; adding, "by your *dress*, I suppose you are fully competent to refute all the arguments in favour of it?"

"I shall not attempt it," replied he with much sang froid, "but must observe, that those who put an end to their existence, from a pretended indifference to the world, are generally such as the world are most indifferent to."

"This truth came home to my feelings. I blushed. I could not but acknowledge its force. I looked at Mr. ——. I thought he read my heart. I quitted the coffee-house, and walked towards the Park, on one of the benches of which I resolved to compleat my tragedy. I had not proceeded far, before my arm was seized by Mr. ——. "Whither are you going, Sir?" said he, sternly.

"How dare you, Sir," replied I, "presume to ask in so authoritative a style?"

"I dare in any place," said he, "oppose a robber.

a robber. How *dare you* deprive the world of the advantages, of which your existence may be productive? I will not enter into the hacknied disputes on the lawfulness of suicide. I have heard of your conduct, Mr. Fitzmaurice. I have witnessed some of your expensive follies. I now ask you, if, when the favourite of fortune, any idea of suicide obtruded itself on your imagination? Did you *then* as fervently admire the doctrines of a Rousseau and a Goethe? You did not, you dare not assert you did. What then will the world conclude from your conduct? You may think that your false magnanimity will be the theme of panegyric: not so; it will be said that Fitzmaurice threw away his fortune like a fool, and his life like a coward, who dared not face what thousands are exposed to."

"I was confounded.

"Confess," added he, "that it is not a fixed principle actuates you; that nothing praise-worthy is annexed to your ideas of self destruction, and that if fortune were
again

again to change, your Rousseau might lie unopened, the pages of your Goethe uncut. You are driven to death by a *want of money*. The midnight plunderer may plead the same excuse for his enormities."

"I shuddered. This truth was incontrovertible. Am I then, thought I, deceived? I deemed my conduct *great*, and must I be upon a par with thieves?"

"I would convince you," continued he, "not work upon your fears. I therefore omit the most material argument."

"What you have said," replied I, breaking silence, "is not without effect. Three words of sound sense are of greater value than controversial disputation. Take the weapon of death. I have used you ill, Mr. —, yet you preserve my life. Well do you follow the precept and example of Him who returned good for evil. Farewel, Sir. May every happiness I have forfeited, fall on *your* head. Think of me with pity, and leave me to life and contempt."

"Not so," returned he; "not so, Mr.

Fitz-

Fitzmaurice. The world will never abandon one, who resolves not to abandon it. By your discourse at the coffee-house, before you observed me, I find you are tainted with misanthropy. Banish the ungenerous impulse. Look upon the bright side of mankind. A misanthrope is in the daily, the hourly habits of loading his fellow creatures with obloquy and derision. Can you blame them for returning the compliment? Permit me to visit you to-morrow morning. The duties of my profession now call me away to a bed of sickness. Forgive my harsh rebuke, and think me what I am—your friend.”

“ After I have used every means to humble and disgrace you,” said I——

“ He interrupted me. “ I know not of that. Will you admit me to-morrow ?”

“ With pleasure.”

“ You promise me.”

“ I promise you.”

“ We then separated ; he to perform an act of piety, I to ruminate on the past, and plan for the future.

“ In

“ In short, the excellent brotherly advice of Mr. ——— so much eradicated my evil propensities, that my heart, long shut to the feelings of a man, began to know its real value. I laid aside false shame, applied to my brother for assistance, and became an adventurer to the East Indies. From hence I frequently wrote to Europe; but by some fatality my letters never reached my brother or Mr. ———. Of a gentleman, who had but lately left London, I enquired for my only surviving relative. I understood that he was married, and that his wife, a gay young woman, had spoken of me in a public company as a wicked extravagant man. Unwilling to press forward when neglect assailed me, I wrote no more to Europe, caused a report of my death to be spread, and resolved, on my return, to enrich my brother or his children, should he or they come to want assistance. Little did I apprehend that he would be so much reduced in the decline of life.

“ I now entered deep into speculations. I visited

visited most parts of the eastern world, nor were different countries of Europe neglected. I would not, however, visit England, till my fortunes were wholly established. My thirst of wealth was insatiable, yet I laboured not for myself. I used, in fancy, to behold the children of my brother, and shower on their heads the wealth I had been at such pains to collect.

“About ten years ago I met the widow of a West Indian planter. I had not been long at Barbadoes, and was engaged in a lucrative speculation. This woman, contrary to the generality of women of that class, was amiable and intelligent. I admired her. She was not handsome, indeed: her age was about thirty. I knew her riches (which, if you will believe a money-getting man, were of no consideration with me) to be great, and imagined she would rather share them with a young husband than one near fifty. I was deceived. In short, I married her, and from the day that made her mine, I can proudly say I never once repented.

repented. Love, indeed, had long since taken his flight ; but if esteem could secure happiness, my wife wholly possessed mine. I lived with her eight years, during which time I made enquiries after my brother. With sorrow did I hear that he was a bankrupt, and in obscurity. My wife perceived my uneasiness, and, with unparalleled generosity, resolved on selling our estates, and departing for Europe. We had no children, and used to amuse ourselves with plans for the benefit of my brother. My Joanna was not to realize them : a violent fever put a period to her existence ten days before the ship was in sight of land. With unfeigned sorrow, I now saw her body committed to the waves, and was for some time in a state of despondency. At length my energies returned. I learnt from Mr. Rigby that my brother was dead. I enquired if he had left any children. He replied, that my brother had had two daughters and a son ; the eldest, Helen, had been dead some years ; the second, Anastatia, was married.

ried to an apothecary in Devonshire. As for the son, he was a finished gentleman, and heir to all his fortune. I had no desire to see this *finished gentleman*. I did not like Rigby's pomposity, and supposed my nephew heir to his faults as well as his fortune. The idea of Anastatia was, however, more soothing. I fancied her neglected, forlorn, and struggling with a worthy husband, to support a rising family.. I pictured to myself a scene of domestic humble happiness. I ordered a post-chaise, and was in a few days conveyed to Rockbourne.

"How must a man of sentiment be delighted at the reception I received, as the friend of the father of Anastatia! I found her in the midst of her children. As near as I can recollect, this was her oration: "I am sure, if you are any friend of my father's, though I never saw you before—Mary, come away from the fire, or you'll push down Natty's chair—you are welcome. I am sorry the Doctor is not at home, and that I can't ask you to

eat a bit of—Neddy, come away from Nat-ty, or I'll whip your bottom as sure as Peter Pomfret ; you are always in mischief, child. Mary, Mary, you'll set your frock on fire : I'll send for the naughty man, and have you taken away, and there would be a pretty spot of work.—I'm sure I beg your pardon, Sir ; but children are such plagues, one always has one's hands full ; nothing but mending, and darning, and working one's fingers to the bone. I'm sure I wear out a fortune in thimbles, and yet the young things—Odsbobs and buttermilk, Neddy and Mary, you will make me take down Toby Ticklepitcher : don't begin crying, don't, or I'll give you something to cry for, I will, ye little plagues of Egypt."

" This elegant harangue ended in her giving me a glass of four ale. To my mention of her father, her answers were—very true indeed—la—yet that's a sad thing—you don't know how glad I was when the coroner brought it in accidental death. Oh, I loved my father, I assure you, very much !"

" Tor-

“Tortured at her apathy, I disguised my real name, under that of Withers, and performed the hacknied part of a poor relation. Mrs. Fitzmaurice I found (pardon me Edward) formal and repulsive; Pobjoy, a compound of hypocrisy, cunning, pertness, ignorance and vanity. I affected the reformer; begged Anastatia to put a cap on her head, and not let her children thrust their fingers in the tea cups, and sugar basin. I could not know their behaviour at dinner, as I never was asked to partake of that meal. I knew I was no favourite; at length I began to be hated; I had indeed never asked for pecuniary aid, and on that account, had been tolerated so long. It grew the custom of the family, when any wild schemes of a neighbour were discussed, to say, “that’s as bad as you, Mr. Withers.” In short, I resolved to try if you, Edward, were formed of earthly mould, and had determined on a journey to London, when I perceived anxiety cloud the faces of the Pobjoys.—Sheets were put

to the fire, new curtains were bought for the best bed, and each member of the family was downright rude ; not only to me, but to every person in the village. Mr. Pobjoy said, that his brother-in-law was coming down, the heir of the rich Mr. Rigby. Mrs. Pobjoy talked of her brother Edward Fitzmaurice, esq. and your mother remarked, that *her* son would be the honour of his family ; and I believe she spoke the truth.

“ One morning I was desired not to call for some time, as Mr. Fitzmaurice was expected. Disgusted with their ill breeding, yet wishing to see you, I lingered about the house. Your arrival in a stage coach pleased me, as I thought it a proof of your good sense. I fully determined to call in the evening, to see if your heart were equally selfish with that of your relations. I soon beheld you quit the house in disorder : I followed you : I heard you exclaim aloud ! “ Damn the world ! ” Alas, thought I, here is a young misanthrope indeed ! I recollected the ad-
vice

vice of Mr. ———; and to try your heart, affected the narrow notions of a cynic—hoping, that by a display of rugged sarcasm, I might shew its deformity, as the Spartans exhibited their slaves in a state of intoxication, as a warning to the rising generation.

“What has since past, you are acquainted with, except my protection of your sister. By my interest, she procured her asylum in the Magdalen, though you fancied it was owing to you. If I could feel angry with a man, who deserves only contempt, I could execrate Pobjoy for declaring, that Helen was no more. I forbear remarks on the rest of the family for your sake, Edward.

I forgot to mention, that the worthy Mr. ——— is now bishop of ——. In his family did I place your repentant sister, and she will, I trust by future goodness, redeem the errors and vices of her early years.”

CHAP. IX.

A Fortune.

WHILE this happy party were losing the pains of the part in smiling contemplation of the future, a note was delivered to Edward; upon opening it, he found these words:

“ I am locked up in a garret ; my wicked husband will kill me ; I have been very simple, I know, but I hope you will come and let me out ; my dear nephew, do pray come !—Sally, who brings this, informed me that you lived in a great style in Harley-street, and one of your servants said you were vastly rich ; if so, and I hope it is so (as I was weak enough to deprive you of my fortune, by marrying that monster of ingratitude Tone) do pray come and let me out ! do pray come and release,

Your much afflicted Aunt in
the flesh, and friend in the spirit.

Deborah Tone.

This incoherent letter, when shewn to Mr. Fitzmaurice, caused him to laugh heartily; he was however, the first to propose flying to her relief. Edward insisted on taking proper officers, as Mrs. Tone had declared her life endangered; and in the evening, accompanied by his uncle and those myrmidons, proceeded to Picadilly. The servants, who opened the door, alarmed at the appearance of so formidable a party, shewed Edward and his uncle into a parlor, where sat Mr. Tone, his mother and grandmother, all three in a state not far from intoxication.

Tone fiercely demanded their business? Edward informed him, that he wished to see his aunt; but Tone informed him, she was in the country.

"'Tis false," cried Edward indignantly, "she is now in this house; hypocrite! I insist on seeing her." "Here's language to the elect!" muttered the women as well as they could articulate.

Tone, from intoxication, was incapable

of resistance ; and Edward, followed by his party, searched the house.

In a mean garret or rather closet, the unfortunate Mrs. Tone was discovered. She was sitting on the ground; for there was no chair or table in the room ; her chin rested on her knees ; she was drest in a rich satin gown, but it appeared as if it had not been pulled off for many days, for her handkerchief and cap were soiled and uncleanly.

When she beheld her nephew, Mrs. Tone hid her face with her hands ; she sobbed with violence, and begged Edward to take her from that wretched place. He offered his hand to assist her, but weeping with rage and shame, she informed him, that her legs were tied together.

“ Rascal !” cried Fitzmaurice to Tone, (who had now staggered up stairs ;) “ what demon could prompt you to such infernal cruelty ?”

“ The father of lies himself !” screamed Mrs. Tone ! “ Let me come at him ! I’ll teach him to use the wife of his bosom in such a manner !”

"Be comforted, Madam," said Edward, "you shall, since you think your life endangered, go with us; my uncle will not refuse you an asylum; but for this wretch."

Tone, who now found that hypocrisy would not avail, assumed the bold villian. "What I have done, sir's," cried he, "I can justify by the law of the land! As for my old fool of a wife, you are welcome to take her, and I hope she will never trouble me again—but as for the fortune, once hers, she must excuse me if I retain that—no marriage articles were drawn up between us, and she has not a shilling she can call her own."

"Take care, Mr. Tone, take care; do not provoke me to speak."

"'Tis too true indeed," said Mr. Fitzmaurice; "she has lost her immense fortune; it is the property of her husband."

"Now, madam," said Tone, "you may walk out of the house as soon as you please; your folly be upon your head."

"No, Mr. Tone, no;—you will walk
out

out of this house sooner than you please, and *your* folly be upon your head. Nephew Edward, this house is yours."

"Madam!"

"Yes, I am at length urged to speak; that monster of iniquity forces me to my own ruin; but it is more comfort to be revenged; there is a subsequent will to that by which I inherit from my husband—it is in your favor, nephew."

This speech restored Tone to his senses; he was confounded; but assuming a bold look, while his lips quivered—"That," said he, "you may make fools believe."

"I shall make you believe it to your cost, you viper! that I have nourished in my bosom" cried Mrs. Tone; "come with me, nephew—in the little breakfast parlor, behind the picture of your poor dear uncle, is the will concealed. He had it drawn up three days before he was snatched away, and had written you a letter, requesting you to return to his house—I suppress these, being given to the simple mammon of this world, and as I was told the elect could do no wickedness

edness, I thought myself very justifiable. I meant to have left you the whole of your property at my death, if this deceiver had not betrayed me by his feigned affection."

"Tone would have rushed to the door, but was prevented:—his wife was leaving the room, when he called to her in a whining voice—"Wife! Wife! Why will you ruin yourself and me?"—

"It is too late to repent now, Mr. Tone!"

"But my dear! reflect on the consequences, my dear!"

"Aye, aye, I am your dear now; but what was I when you locked me in the closet? Did you not compare me to the woman that sits upon the beast, and swear (sic upon it) that I was drunken with wine, when I had only drank small beer?—It is too late now to repent."

Mrs. Tone then left the room, and the picture being removed, a will was found, properly attested. By this will, Mr. Rigby had settled two thousand per annum, as a jointure,

jointure, on his widow, upon condition, that she should never marry again; in that case, it was to descend to Edward, as heir-at-law; and to him was bequeathed the whole of the large fortune, except an annuity of three hundred pounds, which was left to Helen Fitzmaurice. This will was a kind of peace-offering to his nephew, for whom Mr. Rigby had a real affection, and whose absence he could not bear.

Mrs. Tone confessed that she gave large sums to bribe the witnesses to silence. She did not mention the affair to her husband, thinking his piety real, and fearing his disapprobation. When he threw off the mask, she determined to revenge herself and do herself an act of justice. She now begged forgiveness, in a manner so abject, that her nephew thoroughly despised her; he, however, promised that she should enjoy her jointure during her life, and returned to the apartment, where Tone was foaming with rage.

The manly firmness of Edward awed the preacher, who, after a long altercation, agreed

agreed to receive fifty pounds, half-yearly, upon condition, that he should never molest his wife, who should forfeit all claims upon her nephew's bounty, if she lived again with her husband. Tone and his family were now permitted to depart: he gnashed his teeth in impotent rage, but fearful of losing his small income, vented not his fury in words.

Mrs. Tone scarcely dared raise her eyes to her nephew, though he endeavoured to give her every consolation, of which her distressed mind was capable: so selfish was she, that her joy at being delivered from the thralldom of her husband was not sufficient to counter-balance the loss of her ill-gotten wealth: she murmured at her small income, as she termed it, and even proposed some addition, on account of her love of justice, which had prompted her to betray the secret.

Mr. Fitzmaurice was indignant—sternly addressing her, he said,—“ Mrs. Tone, I know not which claims most my contempt
your

—your hypocrisy, or your childish vanity.
—Dare you talk of a love of justice, who have iniquitously defrauded a young man of his lawful inheritance?—Dare you attribute to a love of justice, what was extorted from you by revenge?—Can you boast any share of common sense, when you think of inspiring affection, laden as you are with years and infirmities?—What pity can you lay claim to, but that, due to imbecility of mind?—Perhaps your husband kept you ignorant of your nephew's distresses; but a moment's reflection must have taught you, that he had contracted debts, which you in justice were bound to answer; had you even been the rightful heiress of Mr. Rigby. My excellent nephew's respect to the memory of his uncle, by allowing you the amount of your jointure, I approve, and would recommend you to live retired at Athacombe. Your future conduct may merit my nephew's forgiveness."

Mr. Fitzmaurice then, in a few words, explained the secret of their relationship; and

and Mrs. Tone, after a pious shower of tears, extorted from her by the foregoing lecture, promised to leave London as soon as possible; adding, that she would write to Mr. Pobjoy to get every thing ready for her reception.

At the name of Pobjoy, Mr. Fitzmaurice, good-humouredly rubbed his hands:—"No, no," cried he; "I must have an explanation with the little gallipot vender myself. What say you, Madam; will you allow this party to escort you to Cornwall. Pobjoy has been cheating you I'll be bound: the fellow did not turn canter for nothing."

Mrs. Tone lifted up her hands and eyes, but acquiesced.—The other party then took their leave; and Mrs. Tone, after having scolded her servants (all of her husband's providing) and even the maid who compassionately had provided her with pen and ink; retired to her bed, where she vainly endeavoured to lose in sleep the ideas of her diminished fortune.

CHAP. X.

A proposal of Marriage.

MR. Fitzmaurice begged that Edward's reverse of fortune might be kept a profound secret for the present; and in this he had a double view: to spare the feelings of Mrs. Tone, and expose the hypocritical Pobjoy. The journey to Cornwall was fixed for the next week, but was delayed by unexpected events.

One morning while Edward was sitting with his uncle, the carriage of the Bishop of — drove to the door, and Helen entered the room. During her brother's convalescence, she had been a frequent visitor, and now he was restored to health, affection and gratitude brought her almost daily to Harley-street.

A cheerful conversation ensued; and as Helen was about to depart, a packet was put into the hands of Edward, who, opening

ing it, found two letters, one addressed to him, the other to his sister.

The letter to Edward ran thus :

“ Sir,

“ When the signature of this letter strikes your eye, you will, doubtless, feel indignant at the presumption of the man who has the honour of addressing you. I candidly confess, that my conduct towards Miss Fitzmaurice renders me despicable in my own eyes : with what horror then must I be looked upon by others ? May I entreat you, Sir, to give the enclosed letter (which I have sent, unsealed, for your perusal and approbation) to your much abused sister. To repair her injuries, is the dearest wish of my heart. I acknowledge that I am not ignorant of your reverse of fortune : this has not the most trifling weight with me ; I am ready to take your sister portionless. Let that circumstance plead for me, and prove at once the continuance of my love, and the disinterestedness of my motives. I have the
honour

honour to be, with the most profound respect, Sir,

Your most obedient

and devoted servant,

Aubrey Bellafont Delvalley.

Sackville-street.

“ P. S. My sister is in a declining state of health, or she would, doubtless, have been a mediator between us.”

Helen faintly requested her brother to dispense with her reading the letter addressed to her. “ Time, and experience of my seducer’s treachery,” said she, “ ought to have obliterated every trace of love from my heart: but there are some latent chords, which (though long untouched) will sometimes painfully vibrate. I fear that I cannot with indifference peruse lines, where repentance is professed by a man once dearer to me than family, fame, or life. Permit me to return the letter unread.”

“ You will act as your judgment dictates,”

tates," said Mr. Fitzmaurice; "but do you not think, that to condemn unheard, will favour more of weakness than disdain. Delvalley has been, perhaps is still, a villain; but repentance is a natural emotion, and he *may* be sincere."

Helen complacently smiled: her eyes beamed with half-repressed joy; and with trembling hands she unfolded the letter:

"How shall I address the woman I have so much injured? Shall I call her my beloved Helen, as in days long since past? Days, which to reflect on, are the torture of my existence. The world and its busy scenes have too long swayed my heart. I looked for grandeur; I neglected happiness. Will you spurn me from you, when penitent and goaded with self-reproach, I entreat you to be mine. I possess sufficient for the comforts of life; I cannot invite you to its luxuries. Alas! I have fatally experienced their inefficacy to procure or promote happiness.

"I ask

“ I ask not the gifts of fortune ; by an union with you, I may restore that peace, of which I so cruelly deprived you. Ask me not why thus late I sue for your favour ; suffice it to say, that I blush at my past conduct ; need I add more ? I need not, for if I have not yet an advocate in your heart, volumes of persuasions would fail. However you may decide, dearest Helen, do me the justice to think, that I am

the penitent and affectionate
Sackville-street. A. B. Delvalley.

Helen, whose tears evinced the tumult of her mind, now returned the letter to her brother, and in a faltering voice, requested him to keep it from her sight. “ May I know your resolution, Helen ? ” said Mr. Fitzmaurice. “ Yes, Sir,—Mr. Delvalley’s penitence, seems to be sincere—”

“ Proceed,” said Edward with emotion.

“ He offers to take me portionless ; he cannot know of my late uncle’s bequest, though *your* good fortune is the public theme ; the proposal is generous—”

“ And

"And you accept him, Helen?"

"No, Sir, I refuse the offer; if Mr. Delvalley's penitence be feigned, if by a shew of candour, he cover interested views, he meets his reward in disappointed ambition; if his penitence be real, (and I am willing to believe it) let me act as becomes me, for I swear never to carry pollution to the arms of a husband. I will not marry; I ought not to marry; I have forfeited my rank in society; I may be happy by the unexampled generosity of an uncle and a brother; but I feel my unworthiness too keenly, to assume the enviable title of wife."

"Exalted girl!" exclaimed Mr. Fitzmaurice; "with such sentiments, you will redeem your former errors—from this moment, you are no longer dependent, even on the Bishop's Lady; I will place you in such a situation, as will give you the means of extending blessings to others. I cannot part with you to-day, my Helen; I will send your excuse to his Lordship, your presence is necessary to my happiness."

Helen

Helen now sat down, by the advice of her enraptured uncle, to answer the letter of Delvalley : but the hour of dinner interrupted her, and she was obliged to leave the unfinished sheet. She, however, soon returned with Selina, to pursue her task, and was scarcely joined by Mr. Fitzmaurice and Edward, when a thundering knock at the door, announced the approach of company.

Two ladies entered the drawing-room, and Selina immediately recognized Mrs. and Miss Hargreave's. The former advancing to Selina, said, " Mrs. Fitzmaurice, I have many apologies to make for my unkind behaviour to you, when chance conducted you to my house ; but now the moments are too precious to be wasted in superfluous ceremony ;—may I, madam, speak with you alone."

" For this company," replied Selina, " I can have no secrets, my uncle, my brother and Miss Fitzmaurice have none for me. " Are

"Are you Miss Fitzmaurice, Madam?"
said Mrs. Hargreaves to Helen.

Helen bowed.

"Then," continued Mrs. Hargreaves, "I am more fortunate than I expected, and I may save you from destruction. Here, Sir, (turning to Mr. Fitzmaurice) is a letter which I will beg you to peruse, and afterwards to read aloud, omitting those parts which most will hurt the feelings of my daughter, who is the person alluded to in that infamous scroll."

Mr. Fitzmaurice took the paper in astonishment; and Mrs. Hargreaves addressing Helen, said, "I will not ask the unnecessary question, if you know Mr. Delvalley—that paper fell from his pocket not two hours ago; it was unsealed; situated as my daughter was (on the point of becoming wife to the unworthy writer) she deemed it no impropriety to peruse it.—Comfort yourself, my Sarah, his ungentlemanlike taunts reflect disgrace only on himself."

The letter was as follows :

"To Captain Ainslie, Vere-street.

"Dear Ainslie,

If not too much engrossed by the honeymoon, and the charms of your antiquated bride, you may perhaps take an interest in the concerns of your friend. Little Sally Hargreaves grows so devilishly fond, that I find I must (if I can do no better) e'en follow your example, and submit my sturdy neck to the conjugal yoke. The dear little Yanky has ten thousand pounds; and to say the truth, the gout has made such havoc with my ancles, that I am not able as formerly to "caper nimbly to a lady's chamber."

"I begin insensibly to grow out of date, and am no longer at liberty to consult choice—I must, alas! be contented with what chance throws in my way.

"What think you, noble soldier! The wheel of fortune has taken a pretty whirl—the giddy blind goddess has showered down her gifts on that hated varlet Fitzmaurice; his old aunt and her young husband are parted, and all is his by deed of gift.

"This

"This I heard from one of the servants, who is the companion of my Robert. The story may be true or false, and I am indifferent as to its confirmation; but what is *certain*, is, that an old uncle has started up (from whence heaven knows) and has declared Edward Fitzmaurice his heir.

"Report gives him upwards of twenty thousand a year. At all events, he has a noble house in Harley-street, which formerly belonged to the ambassador, and lives at a great expence.

"Upon this ground, I have offered to marry the very immaculate Miss Fitzmaurice. I understand she is in high favour with the uncle. I wonder where the woman hid herself for upon inquiry I find she left the Magdalen some months ago; whither she went was an impenetrable secret. To impose on the mind of the weak brother, I have offered to take my desolée portionless. —I think I see you start. Yes, the fool Fitzmaurice piques himself on what he calls sentiment; I hope it will fall on me in a golden

den shower. Should it not, a thousand resources are open to me to break off the match. I will then take up with little Yankey, and dream of an episcopal throne. When once there, you know I may sleep on and take my rest.

"I enclose copies of my letters to the brother and sister. Do you not admire my brevity? To tell you the truth, I was afraid of contradicting myself, and therefore made my epistles as short as possible.

"Adieu. I am just going to little Yankey. Ever yours,

A. B. Delvalley."

Helen's cheek glowed with the blush of shame, as Mr. Fitzmaurice read parts of this letter. To stop all comment, she put her unfinished answer into the hands of Mrs. Hargreaves, who read it to herself.

"To say, Sir, that I perused your letter without emotion, would be to transgress that sacred line of truth I am for the future resolved to pursue. You desire me to be-

lieve

lieve your sincerity. I am willing to do so; but I have been the victim of deceit, and my experience renders me slow to credit what my heart would prompt me to wish.

" You tell me the busy scenes of life have too long engrossed you. I fear, not the *busy* scenes alone; but I will not upbraid.

" Your letter is concise. I will endeavour to imitate it; yet such ideas press upon my heart, such soul-rending recollections obtrude themselves upon me, that I could throw aside my pen in despair of conveying the faintest trace of my feelings, or of contracting what I *could* say within the limits of a letter.

" You desire me, Sir, to forbear enquiring as to your tardy repentance. I certainly shall do so; for as I mean not to profit by a moment of self-condemnation, I shall not investigate its motives.

" That I once loved you, Sir, you can have no reason to doubt. For you, did I lay aside the modesty of my sex, forfeit the affection of my family, and (horrid reflection!)

tion!) sustained a parent's curse. Even after your cruel desertion, did I love you; even after that wretched day, when, decked as the victim of your lawless passion, I tremblingly awaited your approach. But what was my subsequent fate? The creature once innocent and beloved, was reduced to the lowest prostitution, and shunned as a loathsome object by the dregs of the vulgar and depraved. Could love still be an inmate of my bosom? Could a passion so holy actuate the mind of one like me? No, Sir. Love ceased to warm my mind. Every generous impulse was lulled asleep. By man was I wronged, on man did I seek to retaliate my injuries.

“ That I was snatched from the hideous whirlpool of libertinism, I first bow to heaven, and next to my generous uncle—my kind brother. To repay the goodness of my friends, is impossible. To shew them I am not ungrateful, is my highest wish. Am I then to fly from such protection? Have I a right to look up to farther blessings, when
I feel

I feel myself unworthy of those I already possess? Shall I become a wife, perhaps a mother, to endure the anguish of knowing how little I deserve those honoured titles? Shall I dare to be happy?

"No, Delvalley; the woman who has once transgressed the sacred laws of chastity, ought to look upon herself as an outcast of society, if even a relenting world should beckon to the penitent, and, departing from general rules, allow an amnesty for the past. — You offer to take me portionless: I acknowledge your generosity; but cannot, will not profit by it, for the reasons I have alledged. That I wish you happy, is most true; and believe me, to hear you are so (for to the happiness I wish, I cannot contribute) will give a ray of pleasure even to my guilty bosom.

"But should you be insincere; should you, by a shew of disinterestedness, mean to practise on the liberality or feeling of my friends, this, my decided rejection of your proposals,

will be a sufficient punishment; as you must in that case conceive how far the victim of your cruelty despises and abhors you."—

—"You have too deep a sense of your errors, Madam," said Mrs. Hargreaves; "I cannot but think you will yet find peace. This letter I applaud from my soul: your rejection is noble, and I hope will not fail to goad the villain for whom it is intended."

Mr. Fitzmaurice having perused the letter, suddenly started; and begging the company present not to separate till his return, which should be speedy: He left the room.

Miss Hargreaves now acquired some degree of composure; her mother apologized for the little command she had manifested over her feelings—(she had wept incessantly)—and added, that a young inexperienced mind was naturally shocked at the first conviction of the existence of vice and duplicity.

An

An hour had elapsed, when a servant threw open the folding doors of the drawing room, and Mr. Fitzmaurice entered, followed by a gentleman —.

“I promised you a decisive answer, Sir,” cried he; “take it!”—And sternly pointing to Helen and Miss Hargreaves, he with an eye of fire almost annihilated the guilt-stricken Delvalley.

Miss Hargreaves sunk half fainting on the shoulder of her supporter: Helen bent her eyes to the ground, and a tear slowly trickled down her again blooming cheek: Mrs. Hargreaves advanced towards Delvalley, holding the letter in her hand—her features, naturally of a melancholy cast, now assumed an expression of dignified resentment and contempt. The hour of retribution was now arrived. The tortures of inquisitorial tyranny could not more have agonized the wretched Delvalley. He beheld himself an object of contempt and abhorrence. He would have spoken, but his

voice died away in murmurs : his ideas were paralyzed by the sudden shock.

" Monster ! " cried Mr. Fitzmaurice ;
" Are you answered ? — Should not the sight of these victims of your too successful art, be sufficient, take this letter from the rescued Helen ! — she despises, she abhors, she rejects you — villain as you are — ! " —

" Of my daughter's contempt, " said Mrs. Hargreaves, " you may rest assured ; nor shall the guilty tale remain a secret. As far as the injured Miss Fitzmaurice is concerned, I must be silent : but trust me, man, your infamous conduct shall be put in its true light ! My family and connections are such as to secure respect and belief ; be mine the task to pull the visor from self-interest, hypocrisy, and guilt. " —

Delvalley, enraged past endurance, could with difficulty stammer — " You may repent this conduct, Mr. Fitzmaurice ; my clerical character — " —

" You have disgraced ! " interrupted Mr.

Fitzmaurice :

Fitzmaurice : " but the little interest I have shall be employed in removing so great a scandal to our ecclesiastical establishment. Characters such as your's, Mr. Delvalley, are, I thank Heaven, rare; yet, as the world is now constituted, an uninvestigating mind might, from a knowledge of you, draw conclusions to the prejudice of a venerable body of men, whose learning and unaffected piety still uphold the too much neglected cause of Christianity. You may retire, Sir: you have, I believe, your promised answer."

Delvallay cast a glance of desperation around: he struck his forehead with his clenched hand, and fled from the room: his lips quivering with curses.

No sooner had his steps ceased to sound, than Helen, raising her eyes, exclaimed—" Oh, Sir! how could you bring Mr. Delvalley here?"

" I weighed the good and the bad consequences likely to ensue from this meeting," replied her uncle; " the pain his presence has given you will be transient, while you

have gained a complete triumph, and drawn the villain from his fancied security."

"I have now," said Mrs. Hargreaves to Selina, "to acquaint you, Madam, with the manner in which your name was first mentioned by Mr. Delvalley: I was standing, with that unworthy man, at my drawing-room window, when Mr. Edward Fitzmaurice passed on the opposite side of the way. The wretch changed colour. I enquired the cause of his trouble, and he informed me, that the person just gone by, was the most ungrateful of mankind; and added, that the wife, who was under the greatest obligations to him, was an artful intriguing woman, who had endeavoured to prejudice him in the opinion of all who were weak enough to listen to her. He likewise said, that he knew of some swindling transactions of the husband, which might (if his lenity did not interfere) entirely blast his future fame, already on the decline. Under these impressions, Madam, I may surely hope your forgiveness if I treated

treated you with a degree of harshness, I hope inconsistent with my nature."

The party, after a long conversation, separated; and Helen was conveyed to the house of her worthy patroness in the chariot of Mrs. Hargreaves.

CHAP. XI.

Further Retribution.

THE Bishop of — was the model of what an ecclesiastic ought to be. This dignified prelate owed his elevated situation to his virtues: he graced the episcopal throne; it conferred no additional lustre on him. All the value he attached to his power in the church and state, was in proportion as it afforded him the means of disseminating truth and virtue. He beheld, with regret, the progress of scepticism and infidelity; this he undauntedly attacked, and stood forth a firm champion of the great Master who sent him. From the pulpit his eloquence was irresistible. Truth boldly insisted upon, need fear no opponent. His audiences were numerous; at length it became fashionable to form a part of them. What began by fashion, ended in conviction: all the town flocked to hear this excellent man;
the

the idle and thoughtless were charmed into attention, and "fools, who came to scoff, remained to pray."—The good Bishop felt it particularly incumbent on him to scrutinize with severity the learning of the candidates for holy orders, but also the character of the clergy of his diocese. He was convinced that the decay of religion was not to be attributed solely to modern philosophy; the conduct of the ministers, to whom its interests were confided, might likewise be no small cause; consequently, at a visitation, no member of the episcopacy was more dreaded: the negligent met reproof; the worthy praise; and praise from the mouth of the Bishop of ———, conferred an honour never to be forgotten.

Helen had, by the desire of her uncle, informed her patroness, that she was about to reside entirely in Harley-street. Mrs. ——— grieved at the parting, but was not selfish enough to attempt to detain her.

Mr. Fitzmaurice had agreed to call for his niece at two o'clock: about that time a knock

knock at the door made Helen start. She hastily finished dressing, and ran down stairs, not doubting but that her uncle was arrived. The parlour-door was open, and in a back room the figure of Delvalley struck the eyes of Helen. He was in close conference with the Bishop: so earnestly were they engaged, that the approach of a third person was unnoticed. The limbs of Helen convulsively shook, and she was obliged to lean for support against a chair.

"I confess, Sir," said his lordship to Delvalley, "that I do not approve of non-residence; you have already much advancement in the church; your arguments do not convince me, though I confess your exemplary conduct deserves every favour. I hope, Sir, that the gentleman to whom you would commit the care of your flock, is every way qualified."

"I humbly thank your lordship," replied Delvalley, who looked the picture of humility; "and hope by my zeal, and attention

tention to every moral duty, as well as my clerical functions, to merit your good opinion—The gentleman I mentioned is a man of extensive classical knowledge.”——

“Is he a *good* man?” said the bishop: I reverence a scholar, but a moral character seems to me to be the first requisite to a clergyman.”

“I omitted,” replied the hypocrite, “to notice his moral character; for I hoped, as I had mentioned him as my intimate friend, it was unnecessary: I have not associated, my lord, with the worthless:—no friend of mine will, I hope, be undeserving your lordship’s countenance.”

“I doubt it not, Mr. Delvalley—I doubt it not:—your character is well known to me:—your conduct has ever been exemplary.—The Living, Sir, is yours.”

Helen would have retired; but Delvalley, who now exultingly lifted his head, met her eye. He started, and exclaimed,—“I am undone!”

“How?” cried the bishop.

“You

"You come, doubtless, to exult in my ruin; but I have deserved it.—Be satisfied—you cannot sink me lower."

"Oh! I come not to accuse!" cried Helen: "lost to virtue and truth as you are, I would not ruin you."

"This," said his lordship, gravely, "must be explained."

"Let her then explain!" raved Delvalley:—but think not to triumph in my sufferings.—No, Helen! I will put it beyond the reach of fate to wound me deeper."

He rushed wildly from the house. Helen sunk on the floor; and Mr. Fitzmaurice, who soon after entered, immediately comprehended the cause of her disorder. He tenderly requested her to leave the room, and compose her spirits. Helen gladly obeyed, and sought the company of her protectress, who offered every soothing alleviation, of which a polished mind is capable.

The worthy bishop heard the infamous tale with dismay:—"And on 'this man,'" exclaimed

exclaimed he, with uplifted hands, " was I about to bestow a considerable situation in the church. With honest pride may I aver, that I have ever sought to promote real merit, without regard to the claims of rank. In this man (it is the lot of humanity to err) I thought worth and dignity united. Mr. Delvalley has, till now, supported an unblemished character.—His family is noble.—The knowledge of that, should have taught carefully to guard the honour transmitted from sire to son.—His literary productions were such as to reflect honour on the head and heart of the writer. Under these circumstances, my dear Sir, I was led to think Mr. Delvalley an ornament to the profession he had embraced.—His hypocrisy was unbounded: and who but the mighty Master shall read the thoughts of the heart? My eyes are now opened—A villain shall no longer disgrace our pure establishment—I will take such steps as will evince my resolution to punish villainy.—Had you, Mr.

Fitzmaurice,

Fitzmaurice, mentioned the name or profession of the man to whom the misfortunes of your Niece were owing, he should long since have ceased to be a scandal to our order."

Mr. Fitzmaurice now summoned Helen, who, with tears of gratitude, took leave of her beneficent protectors. When the chariot stopt in Harley-street, Edward flew to the door:—"I must speak with you, Sir—Helen remain where you are—our stay will not be long."

Mr. Fitzmaurice hastily entered the house, and Helen remained in the chariot—her heart fluttered, she knew not why—a quarter of an hour elapsed—her uncle, her brother returned not—a quarter of an hour elapsed—her alarm increased—her situation was irksome—she repeatedly consulted her watch—another quarter of an hour slowly dragged away; and at length a servant informed her, that her uncle requested to speak with her:—she was assisted from the chariot,

riot, and entered the parlour with trembling steps. A presentiment whispered that her feelings would receive a rude shock.

"Helen!" exclaimed Mr. Fitzmaurice, "your conduct, in regard to Mr. Delvalley, has hitherto been noble. Will you act consistently with the high opinion I have formed of your heart?"

"I hope, dearest Sir," cried the trembling Helen, "that you have no distrust of my sincerity."

"None!—But human nature is vindictive; and the late scene with Mr. Delvalley must have eradicated from your bosom every tender sentiment for an object so unworthy."

"Y-es," replied Helen, in a low and tremulous voice.

"The void is, doubtless, filled with a desire of vengeance."

"No," replied Helen, firmly, "it is not."

"I fear to hurt you, Helen—Mr. Delvalley would see you—he wishes——"

"His

"His wishes, Sir, are vain—I am convinced of his unworthiness—I will not give my hand to a slave of sordid self-interest."

"You mistake," said Edward; "Mr. Delvalley——"

"Name him not! Dearest brother.—I will never see him more—I will forgive—I will---forget him."

"He will soon need forgiveness from a higher power," said Edward;—"he is dying."

Helen faintly echoed the words—her colour faded.—At length she stammered—

"All artifice, perhaps——"

"That was my opinion," said Edward; "but the tears of age are not lightly shed—the grey-headed steward, Barlowe, has confirmed the horrible tale."

"Horrible!" exclaimed Helen,— "has then Delvalley been rash enough to——"

"You have divined it," interrupted Fitzmaurice. "Agitated by shame, and perhaps remorse, he flew from the house of his diocesan,

Diocesfan, and had no sooner reached his own dwelling, than he swallowed a large quantity of laudanum."

"Delvalley, I forgive you!" exclaimed Helen,—“from my inmost soul, do I forgive you—let me not again reproach you—I will go, Sir—let us fly.”

Fitzmaurice had the penetration to perceive, that the agitation of his Niece was occasioned by a long smothered, though unextinguished affection for her seducer. He, nevertheless, kindly pretended to attribute her emotion to her horror at an act of suicide.

When the chariot stopped in Sackville-street, the door was opened by the porter, who begged Edward to follow a footman to the apartment of his master.

“How does Miss Delvalley bear the shock?” demanded Edward.

“Ah! Poor young lady! She is insensible to all that passes,” replied the man.

Edward imagined, that grief had overpowered her, and followed his conductor.

Mr. Fitz-

Mr. Fitzmaurice entered a parlour, followed by the almost exanimate Helen. Distant shrieks, as of women, were heard: the house was otherwise silent as the grave.

In a short time, Edward returned.—“Summon your courage, Helen,” said he, “or spare your feelings by immediately quitting this house.”

“Delvalley is then no more!” said Helen, mournfully.

“He is not yet dead—he wishes to see you, but——”

“Oh, frame no objections!—Let me assure him of my forgiveness,” She flew into the hall; and without knowing which way to take, began to ascend the stairs. Edward followed, and conducted her to the chamber of Delvalley.

As they were advancing to the door, a loud shriek struck the ear; but it came not from the apartment of the dying man. Heedless of any distress but her own, Helen hastily threw open the door.

On entering the room, what a spectacle presented

presented itself to her eyes:—Mrs. Hargreaves was on her knees at the bed's foot: her daughter was the statue of despair by her side.—The grey-headed steward wringing his hands, contemplated his dying master.—But Delvalley was the picture of horror—his widely-staring eyes, and black quivering lips, plainly shewed, that death would not be tardy to relieve him from bodily suffering.—A physician sat on the bed.

Helen wildly rushed forward.

“Oh, Delvalley!” cried she, “is it thus I am doomed to see you?”

“Are you then come indeed, Helen?—Do you—can you forgive me? I thank this interval of ease, which permits me to admire such exalted goodness. Before the persons present, I declare you heiress of all I possess. Poor remuneration for the loss of happiness and domestic comfort! But what shall I say to this other object of my cruelty?”

“Speak not of me, Mr. Delvalley,” cried Miss Hargreaves—“again, and again, do I assure you of my forgiveness.”

"Be comforted, Sir," said Mrs. Hargreaves;—"of my child's pardon and mine, you may be assured."

"Oh, there again," raved Delvalley, "am I torn with agony. Oh, Sir! (turning to the physician) is there no hope?—no slight, no distant hope of saving my life?—How dare I face that Being, whose laws I have neglected, whose power I have set at nought, whose cause I have betrayed?—Is there no hope?—In pity teach me to think I shall not die."

The physician remained silent.—Delvalley earnestly consulted his countenance, but no hope was to be gathered from thence.—The unhappy man fell backwards—horrible convulsions ensued, and the servants were summoned. With difficulty could the united force of four athletic men confine the writhing form of Delvalley—his eyes glared, as if they would burst from their sockets, and blood started from his livid lips. At length, exhausted by involuntary exertion, the patient recovered a sense of his misery—he again addressed the physician.

"Is there no hope?—Oh, give me hope!
—I may yet live—I may repair my crimes.
—Oh, no!—I may live, but to repair my
crimes is impossible."

"I have already informed you, Sir," said
the physician, "and painful was the task,
that you have but a short time to live;
think, then, of more important concerns,
and apply comfort to your soul."

"Would I could! Would I could!" raved
Delvalley; "but it will not, it cannot be—a
seducer! A suicide!—Of the past I think
with horror—of the future, with despair."

Convulsions again seized the wretched
man: his robust frame long withstood
their violence.—Deep-drawn sobs, which
struggled for a vent, heaved his panting bo-
som. At length with a groan, which rent
asunder body and soul, he lay extended a
bloated corpse.

Helen and Miss Hargreaves, unable to
bear the scene, hid their faces in the bosoms
of each other. Mr. Fitzmaurice beheld the
lifeless form with compassion; and addressing
the steward, whose tears fell in streams over

his venerable cheeks, said, "that it would be necessary to apprise lord Delvalley, who was at Berlin, of the demise of his brother."

The steward approached the body.

"Ah!" cried he, "never were two better youths than my lord and Mr. Aubrey, when my late lord lived. They were beloved by every body, and well did they deserve it. But it is necessary it seems to go to a public school and a college: They came back with a power of learning, to be sure, but were quite spoilt by finishing their education. My young lord used to love the poor, and would never break in the hedges; but when he came back from Oxford, he used to make game of the people who complained of his destroying a field of wheat; and then two years after, my old lord died:—the estate was put out to nurse, as they call it, and my young lord obliged to go out of the kingdom like a vagabond: as for poor Mr. Aubrey—but we must never speak ill of the dead.—So I declare that I never suspected him of any wickedness, till it all came out."

Mr. Fitzmaurice, in a low voice, asked

the particulars of his death; and the steward informed him, "that Delvalley had come home in violent agitation; and immediately flew to his room, and locked the door. In a short time he violently rung the bell, and ordered a physician to be called. He cried out that he had poisoned himself; and a phial, which in the morning was full of laudanum, was found empty on the table.—The physician came, but having administered some remedies, declared the case desperate. Delvalley then sent for Miss Hargreaves and her mother, together with Helen and Edward."

The physician now took his leave, and Mr. Fitzmaurice persuaded all present to leave the room, that the corpse might be prepared for interment. Supported by him and Edward, the trembling women were about to leave the place, when several loud shrieks were heard, and a majestic female figure, in a white undress, with her long hair dishevelled, wildly rushed into the room. She was followed by two women, who cried out, "that it was not her fault; she had got

out, and begged that the physician might be sent for, as she minded nobody but him, and would otherwise do a mischief to herself or others."

The ladies alarmed, retired as far as possible from the maniac; who, advancing towards the bed, discovered to Edward, the altered and disfigured features of Augusta.

She approached where the corpse lay extended.

"Fitzmaurice! Fitzmaurice!" said she, in a pensive tone, "I have heard the name repeated! Is he then dead?"

A discordant laugh burst from her lips.

Edward stood motionless.—Augusta heeded him not.—She cast around her eyes, but they rested on no particular object.—At length they fell on the livid countenance of her brother.—She with a scream advanced—"What! What is this?—Oh, Ainslie! Oh, Aubrey!—Ye have then revenged me, and the perjured Fitzmaurice lies dead before me,—Yes, I am revenged!—Wretch! Monster!"

The countenance of Augusta took the expression

pression of a fiend.—Foam gathered on her lips; and every nerve thrilled with phrenetic rage.—

“ You had a wife, Fitzmaurice !—I joy she lives.—Her groans will be music to my ear !—I will feast upon her anguish !—She is in a prison !—Her days pass in sorrow; and my form, like the minister of vengeance, shall haunt her nightly dream.—Wretch ! Monster ! Villain ! ”

Augusta darted forwards with demoniac fury : she seized the corpse, and struck it repeatedly with her clenched hand.

Edward rushed to prevent her; and Augusta, exhausted, sunk on the ground.—Mr. Fitzmaurice would have approached her, but the women declared, that the moment any opposition was offered to her will, her strength returned, and her life would be endangered.

Edward placed himself between Augusta and the corpse of her brother. The ladies, unable to bear the scene, retired to another
14 apartment,

apartment, where they might weep without interruption.

Augusta gazed earnestly at Edward—"I know you well," said she, "are you not my brother?" "Heaven be my witness," said Edward, "that I feel for you a brother's pity."

"Pity!" exclaimed she, and another hysteric laugh burst from her; "pity!—rejoice with me, Aubrey, rejoice, rejoice! You killed him! and why did you so? had he ever injured *you*?—go Aubrey, go—Beloved Edward! why did you slight the hand of her, to whom thousands offered incense? We may, yes we may yet be united, when the hateful Ormerode shall sleep in the grave, and of the grave shall she soon be tenant."

"Be comforted, Madam; let us retire from this scene of sorrow."

"Sorrow and I," replied Augusta, without taking her eyes from Edward, have long been known to each other.—But are you not my brother? those features were once the features of Fitzmaurice; must his hateful form ever pursue me? Aubrey, Aubrey, throw

throw away the frightful mask; must every object remind me of my beloved Fitzmaurice?"—

"Great indeed are his sufferings!" said Edward;—"you cannot make him more wretched than he is at this moment."

"I was told so—I was told so," exclaimed Augusta, with quickness, "Ainslie told me so, but he deceived me; all the world deceived me; I thought him wretched; I gloried in his miseries, and for that temporary gleam of joy, have I given my person to shame and my soul to perdition!"

Edward shuddered as this victim of passion told her incoherent tale; Mr. Fitzmaurice anxiously awaited the return of the physician, he drew the curtains of the bed close, hoping to entice Augusta from the room; in this he succeeded; Edward retreated towards the door—she followed him—they entered another apartment, and the servants were admitted to perform the usual functions to the dead.

The eyes of Augusta moved not from the face of Edward; "you much resemble a person

person I once knew," said she—"I have forgotten how to weep, or the remembrance, I think, would claim a tear—No, no, I cannot weep, my brain is the seat of flames; the stream of my tears has long been dried up;—tell me, truly, who are you?"

Edward shrunk from the question—"I am one," said he, "who sincerely regret the horrid events of this day, and whose heart bleeds at the sight of your sorrow."

"Do you then think me unhappy?—renounce your error—Fitzmaurice is my victim; you are strangely like him;—but I am not surprized; all reminds me of the beloved object;—fancy cloaths the unembodied air, and Fitzmaurice is ever before me."

"If ———" said Edward.

She hastily put her hand to his mouth—"Oh, doubt it not; he was all we annex to the idea of perfection: his mind was pure, his person lovely; but—Monster! Monster! To trample upon and spurn the heart of Augusta Delvalley! Would my hatred, my rooted hatred avail, he should be torn from

from the grave again to endure the miseries of existence !”

Curses and blasphemies now burst from the rosy lips of Augusta ; her face resumed its terrific glance, her frame underwent convulsive emotions.

At this moment the door opened, and a gentleman entered the room ; Augusta started, and her ravings ceased.

“ What is this ?” cried the gentleman ; “ retire, Madam, to your own apartments.” Augusta slowly obeyed, and glided away.

Mr. Fitzmaurice was almost overpowered by the shocking scene ; the physician informed him, that his patient had been in a state of insanity some time, and added, that he feared nothing but death would relieve her from her misery. Fitzmaurice and all the party now left the house. To divert the mind from too deep a contemplation of past events, it was deemed proper to expedite the journey to Cornwall, which took place in a few days.

CHAP. XII.

The Denouement.

As the carriages approached Athacombe, pleasure again glowed in the eyes of all the travellers, except in those of Mrs. Tone. She reflected with bitter regret, that the mansion house was no longer hers; she wept at the idea, and quoted a variety of texts on the uncertainty of riches.

When the carriages drew near the village, Mr. Fitzmaurice perceived there was a great croud assembled, and expressed his surprise, as the journey had been kept secret; but he was deceived in his conjecture. A country boy hastily ran by; Mr. Fitzmaurice stopped the carriage, and demanded the cause of such a concourse of people.—“They do say as Master Pobjoy is to be put in the stocks,” cried the panting boy, and ran on. Mr. Fitzmaurice, laughing heartily, declared he was glad of it; but Mrs. Tone, in a demure

mure voice, said, "that doubtless the good-for-nothing brat was a frequenter of steeple-houses, and an enemy to the elect."

The crowd now first recognized Mrs. Tone. The carriages stopped. Mr. Fitzmaurice, with the alertness of youth, leaped to the ground, and, penetrating through the crowd, recognized Pobjoy, without hat or wig, sitting in the stocks, half dead with rage and intoxication. The constable, who now first learned that Mrs. Tone was arrived, grew alarmed, and was preparing to release the delinquent; but Mr. Fitzmaurice prevented him, and advancing to the carriages, begged the whole party to alight.

Mrs. Tone was ready to sink into the earth with vexation. "Oh, fie upon it, fie upon it, Mr. Pobjoy!" exclaimed she, "who could have thought *you* guilty of backsliding and iniquity."

"Fie upon yourself, you jade!" cried Pobjoy, without opening his eyes (for he apprehended if he saw nobody, nobody could

could see him). "Fie upon me, indeed! I'll take the law. I have as much right to kiss the parson's daughters as any other. Did not I marry the sister of the nephew of the rich Mr. Rigby's widow that was?"

"Aye, aye," said the constable, (who would have released the prisoner if Mr. Fitzmaurice had not prevented him) "but Parson Plowden says, that if you was the relation of the Queen of *Shebear*, or the Archbishop of Canterbury himself, you should not *consult* his daughters. Don't you know Madam Rigby—I mean Madam Tone, Master Pobjoy?"

"I know she is an old fool, and ought to be whipped at the cart's tail for marrying a man young enough to be her grandson; and I know you are a rogue, and ought to be hanged. I'll take the law of you all! Why don't you let me out? My leg is almost broke. Is this a way to use a body?"

"Oh, Mr. Pobjoy," exclaimed Mrs. Tone, "think not of such trifling sublunary concerns. What is a broken leg to a broken
broken

Broken spirit? What is a body to a soul?
What is ——”

“What is cat-and-a-fiddle?” roared Pobjoy; “who made you a ruler and a judge over us, pray? Go home to your husband, do, and I hope he will thrash you well with all my soul! I wish Mrs. Tone were here for a few minutes; she would teach you to insult me; she would make you laugh on the wrong side of your mouth.”

“Why,” said the constable, “if you would let daylight into your eyes, Master Pobjoy, you would see the *leady*.”

“See the *leady*! see a whipping-post, you rogue!—She has served me a pretty trick; got me from my own fine estate in Devonshire, as pretty a house, with as noble a park as ever was laid out; and then the root-house! that was a jewel of taste indeed. My estate was twice, aye four times as large as hers, and now she gets me to be steward, in order to have me clapped in the stocks!”

This oration, which was interrupted by frequent

frequent hiccups, and nodding from side to side, failed not to open the flood-gates of Mrs. Tone's eloquence. She compared him to Judas, who bore the bag; to Shemei, who flung stones at the righteous; to Aaron, who set up the golden calf; and to Solomon, who ran after strange women.

"I wish they were all in the stocks," roared Pobjoy, "and that you had a locked jaw, and see if I would help you to your clack again. If I must sit here, leave me alone, can't you? I want to sleep, so don't keep such a cursed chattering."

Mrs. Tone declared that he had cloathed himself with iniquity as with a garment; and began to hold forth on the enormity of his conduct, to the great entertainment of Mr. Fitzmaurice, but not to the edification of Pobjoy, who fell fast asleep.

Mrs. Tone, unable to bear her ridiculous situation, burst into tears. Edward now shook Pobjoy by the shoulder; and had not his uncle entreated him to desist, would have released the prisoner from wooden
duration.

duration.—Pobjoy slowly waked: he opened his eyes with a noise between a yawn and a howl; but gazed with a vacant stare and open mouth, when he beheld who were the spectators of his disgrace.

Mrs. Tone, who thought the situation of her steward a reflection on herself, now advanced, and with a half-submissive, half-authoritative voice, bade the constable release the prisoner from the engine of shame. Mr. Fitzmaurice would not, however, permit him, and Edward was about to plead the feelings of his mother and Anastatia, when Pobjoy, frightened into sobriety, exclaimed—“ Oh, the wickedness of this world! Yes, Mr. Edward Fitzmaurice, I see how it is—you would prevent your good and pious aunt from releasing me: but thou art a son of Belial, and abomination is under thy tongue. — Good madam, listen not to that sprout of Satan’s own rearing.—You did right to cut him down, and cast him into the fire:—he is not an ingredient for the pottage of the elect.

elect. As for the other trunk of wickedness, Withers, he will only set the country in a flame—he is a jacobin, and an Irish defender—he will try to talk money out of your pockets. Worthy lady, order me to be released, and I will assert my innocence:—I can prove the malice of my persecutors, and will plainly shew, that these two bowers of the knee to Baal, have been lurking in disguise about the country, to kill me and burn the mansion-house. Ah! pious lady! if you did but know the good care I have taken of your noble estate!—how I have raised the rents!”——

“Yes, that you have!” cried a woman, with a child in her arms — “You have raised the rents, that it is a shame to be thought on:—it is no wonder that you now wear silk stockings, and thingumeries at the wrist’es:—but no one’s above the law:—the king and Madam Tone herself are not above the law, so I’m glad you’ve met your desarts, you skin-flint:—if you was to sit there
till

till I let you out again, you would know the place when you saw it again, I warrant."

At length, Mr. Fitzmaurice, in compliance with the intreaties of Edward, commanded the constable to set the poor steward at liberty. The villagers made bonfires in honour of Mrs. Tone; for they were ignorant that she was no longer lady of the manor.

Mrs. Fitzmaurice and Anastatia were absent on a visit to a female gossip, who lived about five miles from Athacombe, and were not expected for two or three days. Mrs. Tone officiated as mistress of the house, and seemed tolerably reconciled to her situation.

The next morning, Mr. Fitzmaurice proposed to examine the worthy steward; but he was not to be found: enquiries were made, but in vain. At length a little boy was seen lurking about the house: on being questioned as to his designs, he confessed that he was commissioned by Mr. Pobjoy to steal an old black satin waistcoat, which

which was hid in the hay-loft. The boy was secured, the loft searched, and the waistcoat found. The pocket contained a letter, addressed to Edward—it was from his mother.—She informed him, that Mr. Pobjoy made many objections to her sending him any relief; but she could not find it in her heart to desert him: she sent him fifty pounds, (the note was inclosed) and added, that Anastatia would gladly contribute to his comfort, if Mr. Pobjoy were less rigorous, for he never let her have a penny at her own disposal.

This letter, in some degree, softened the anger of Mr. Fitzmaurice against Anastatia and her mother. Having learned from the boy that the apothecary was at the sign of the goat-in-boots, he ordered his servants to bring him back to the mansion-house. But Pobjoy, fearing some accident might have befallen his messenger, had already departed. He, however, by mistake, had thirteen hundred pounds in his pocket, the property

perty of Mrs. Tone : these he never thought of returning.

Mr. Fitzmaurice would have doubled the income of Helen, but she would not permit him : she fitted up a small, but elegant cottage, where she lives with her mother and sister, devoting her time to the education of the children of the latter. Pobjoy has never been heard of, and it is supposed he sailed for America. Augusta's recovery being hopeless, her brother, lord Delvalley, took possession of her property, and she was removed to an asylum for lunatics, where she remains a sad monument of the effects of unrestrained passions.

Mary Collins and the footman of Ainslie were both executed for a forgery ; the former, after condemnation, wrote to Mrs. Beddome, acknowledging her evil deeds : the good lady made every apology to Selina, who was happy to embrace the fosterer of her youth.

Ainslie still walks about Bond-street, is still a sharper, and has almost squandered the
large

large property of lady Margaret: when fortune declares against him, he will sink to that contempt his vices and follies expose him to; while Edward and Selina, by acting from principle, enjoy the greatest happiness known to mortality.

FINIS.

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